

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL AS SEEN BY CONTEMPORARY AND SUBSEQUENT WRITERS

R.D. Whiteman

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R.D. Whiteman

St Mary's College

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I certify that Robert David Whiteman has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1981, No. 2 and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of M.Phil. (Mode A).

Dr D.W. Lovegrove
St Mary's College
University of St Andrews

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1 October 1986 and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. under Resolution of the University Court, 1981, No. 2 on 1 October 1986.

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, and is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out under the supervision of Dr D.W. Lovegrove.

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Robert David Whiteman

Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which writers have seen the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. The contemporary perceptions of the phenomenon have been examined through the study of the charges made against the movement by those outside it and the responses which such charges provoked. The portrayal of the Revival in the plays, poems and novels contemporaneous with it has also been reviewed. The Revival itself has been defined as 1730 to 1830 for reasons outlined in the Introduction. The perceptions of the Evangelical Revival in the work of historians and biographers from 1830 to the present day has also been covered in two further sections. The literature on the Revival from these years has been surveyed alongside the literature contemporaneous with the Revival itself. The aim of the study is to show the differing perceptions of the Evangelical Revival inside and outside the phenomenon and among later writers have changed and in so doing it is hoped to cover previously uncharted territory.

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I would like to thank Dr D.W. Lovegrove for all his invaluable help and advice during the year. I am indebted to the librarians of St Andrews, Dundee and Edinburgh Universities, St Paul's School and the British Library. I would also like to thank Dr J.R. Ball, Mrs D.M.A. Roberts and Miss E.R. Muirhead for their generous hospitality and assistance; Miss J.M. Randles for her proof reading, Miss E.C. Whiteman for her help with the typing, St John's House for a stable and encouraging working environment and St Mary's College for the Tulloch Memorial Scholarship. Finally, I must thank my parents Dr J.L. Whiteman and Mrs R.E.H. Whiteman without whose support, financial and otherwise, this work would never have been completed.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis examines the perceptions of the Evangelical Revival seen in the writers of controversial pamphlets during the revival itself and its portrayal in the literature of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and the histories of the latter and the twentieth centuries. The second chapter presents an overall outline of the number of pamphlets in the period from 1730 to 1830. The reasons behind the choice of these dates is given below. The third chapter examines the apologetic and polemic literature of Methodism to the last quarter of the eighteenth century in an attempt to see how internal and external contemporaries of the Revival viewed it. The fourth chapter concentrates on the internal relations of the Revival and shows how the internal unity of its early years disappeared. The attacks on evangelical belief and the defences of it made between the French Revolution and 1830 are examined in chapter five. The perceptions of the Evangelical Revival seen in the histories written in the rest of the nineteenth century occupy chapter six and chapter eight does this for the twentieth century. The portrayals of the Revival in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature are covered in chapter seven. The last chapter attempts to see general directions in the portrayals of the Evangelical Revival seen in the previous two and a half centuries and covered in this thesis.

Before starting the reviews it is necessary to give a brief idea of what the Evangelical Revival can include and why the limiting dates of 1730 to 1830 have been chosen. In 1729 a Holy club started in Oxford. Among its members were John and Charles Wesley and later they were joined by George

Whitefield. These men were soon noticed for their religious earnestness in a time of general laxity and acquired the nickname of Methodists which was to stay with them. In the second half of the 1730's several members of this club underwent evangelical conversions. From this time these men took up field-preaching to spread an evangelical gospel. The year 1730 was chosen as it roughly marks the start of this process. It is not, however, a definitive starting point and several writers who will be examined saw the Revival starting before this year.

At the same time as the two Wesleys and Whitefield were undergoing evangelical conversions several Anglican clergymen underwent parallel but completely unrelated experiences. From the 1740's to the end of our period evangelical principles were being expounded throughout Britain and their popularity was growing. The end of the eighteenth and the start of the nineteenth centuries saw the Revival gain strength in the Established Church, a rapid increase in Dissent through a turn to evangelical beliefs and a sudden outburst of philanthropic enterprise throughout the evangelicals along undenominational lines.

1830 has been chosen as a cut-off for the Evangelical Revival for several reasons. Although evangelical beliefs continued both inside and outside the church after this date, and some would say reached greatest ascendancy after this date, several changes occurred which make this a viable point to close the Revival. In 1828 and 1829 Acts were passed in Parliament which removed the taint of second-class citizenship from Roman Catholics and Dissenters. 1832 saw the Reform Act which greatly increased the number of people who were eligible to vote. These Parliamentary actions changed the structure of British society. Changes were also afoot in evangelical circles. In May 1831 Exeter Hall opened and

ushered in a new era of philanthropy. The evangelical Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and others had become or were becoming more respectable by 1830 and denominationalism set in, the period of interdenominational activity at the beginning of the nineteenth century closed. The rate of growth of these sects slowed after 1830 while the Established Church after a steady decline in the eighteenth century started to grow again in absolute terms after 1830. Thus the choice of 1830 as an end to the Evangelical Revival is not purely arbitrary but has some justification.

Before starting the needs inherent in historiography must be realised. When studying a writer it is obviously necessary to represent his views accurately and this will involve more quotation than might be seen as necessary in different studies. It is also necessary to appreciate the position from which the writer is writing in case this background explains a view which the author holds. Throughout the work this information has been included where relevant.

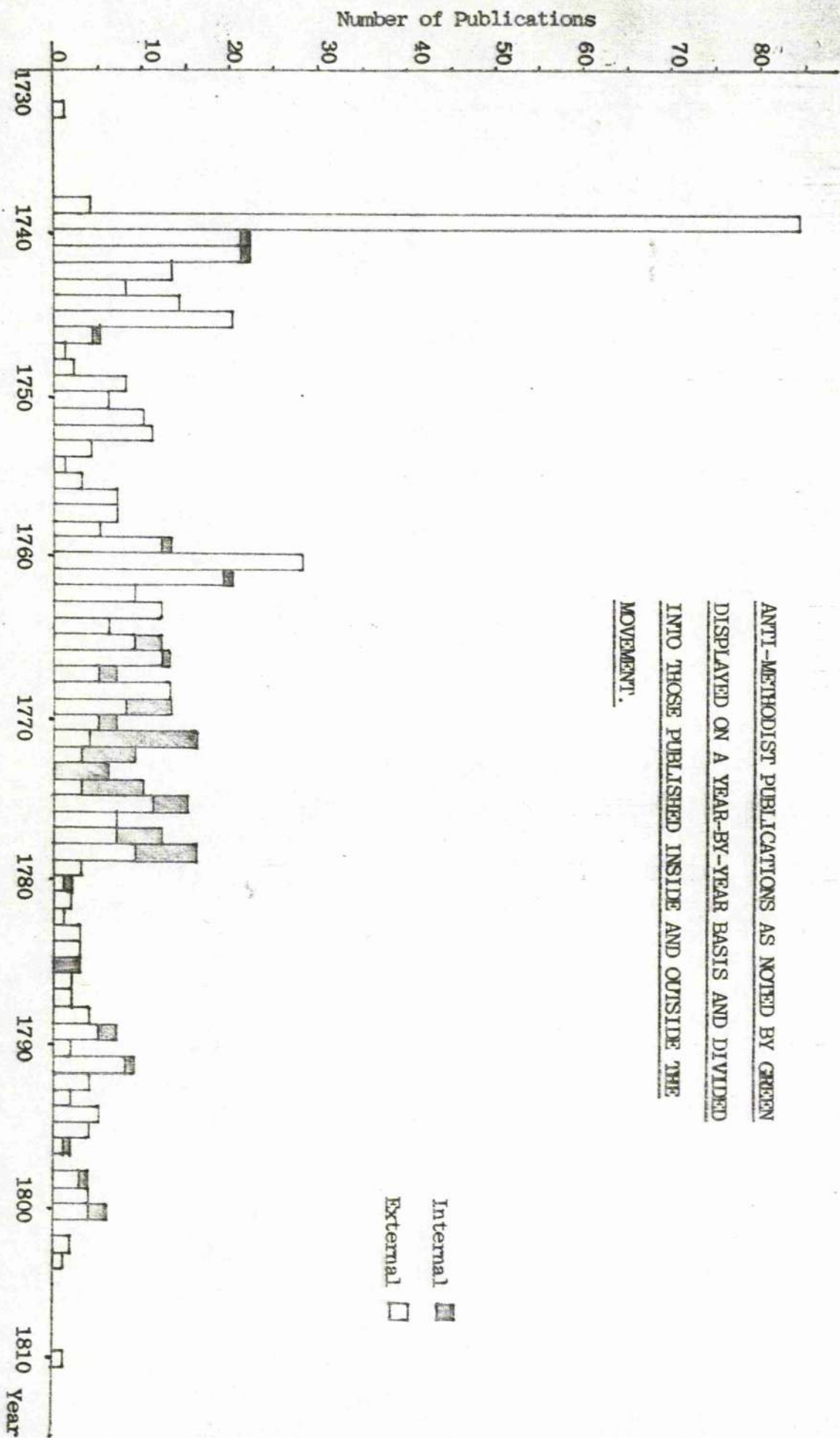
Chapter Two

1730-1830 : An Overall View

This chapter will refer heavily to the graph overleaf. This graph shows the distribution of anti-Methodist publications through the eighteenth century with a slight overspill into the nineteenth century. It also shows the variations within this distribution of the number of pamphlets produced by writers inside and outside the Evangelical Revival. These later statistics can not be ascertained with total certainty as many of the publications appeared anonymously. In compiling the graph it has been assumed that anonymous writings were produced by outsiders to the Revival unless the anonymity has been penetrated and the writer is known to be within the movement [1] or this was illustrated by the contents [2]. This has been done because the contents of most of the anonymous pamphlets did not display an insiders knowledge but an outsiders gall.

The statistics for the graph have been drawn from Rev R. Green's Anti-Methodist Publications issued during the Eighteenth Century (1902). Green was a Wesleyan Methodist Minister, he viewed the pro-Calvinistic publications of the various disputes over free-will and predestination as the attacks on Methodism. These make up the bulk of anti-Methodist publications from inside the movement which have been included on the graph. Also included in the internal publications are the works of Macgowan, Maxfield, Relly, Helton, Moorhouse, Moore and Hopkinson who had been Methodists but had left the Connexion at the time of writing [3]. Hall and Davis were still within the Methodist movement when they wrote against the movement. Some of the publications included by Green have not

ANTI-METHODIST PUBLICATIONS AS NOTED BY GREEN
DISPLAYED ON A YEAR-BY-YEAR BASIS AND DIVIDED
INTO THOSE PUBLISHED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE
MOVEMENT.



been included in the graph because they were not anti-Methodist publications but reviews of the charges advanced against Methodism [4] or apologies for Methodism [5].

1739 saw the first field-preaching by Wesley and the gradual exclusion of the Methodists from almost all of the pulpits of the Established Church. It also saw the greatest number of anti-Methodist writings in any single year. The number of anti-Methodist publications declined in 1740 and 1741 but was still high when compared with most of the rest of the century. This downward trend continued until 1744 and more particularly 1745 when the Jacobite Rebellion led by Bonnie Prince Charlie was at its height. The Methodists were attacked in this period because they too, appeared to be attacking the established order of society.

The 1750's saw far fewer attacks on the Methodists than the previous decade, both in written and physical forms. After 1751 there was no mob-violence against Methodism. 1760, however, saw an upsurge in anti-Methodist writing prompted by the appearance of Samuel Foote's The Minor. The play itself will be examined in Chapter Seven. Green lists eleven anti-Methodist publications linked with this play. The play was so foul and slanderous that it led several people to writing in complaint at its base level. These publications were taken by some as support for Methodism and provoked attacks. The figure of thirteen pamphlets for 1759 cannot be seen as part of this surge because it was imbalanced by seven pamphlets written by Dr Free, Vicar of East Coker, Somerset, against the application of a Methodist for the Lectureship at St Dunstan's-in-the-East in London.

The 1760's saw a steady trickle of anti-Methodist publications at a higher level than the 1750's had seen. This was bolstered by several factors, firstly, that in 1763 the influential Warburton's The Doctrine of Grace was

published; secondly, that 1765 saw the publication of Wesley's comments on Hervey's Theron and Aspasio; thirdly, that six students were expelled from St Edmund Hall, Oxford in 1768, when their chief offence was their Methodist beliefs. These events and the continued success of anti-Methodist plays[6] kept Methodism in the public eye and, therefore, open to attack. It must be remembered, however, that this was still at a much lower level than 1739 and the early 1740's.

The 1770's saw a further reduction in the external attacks on Methodism. The real exception to this was 1775 when Wesley was attacked for his Calm Address to the American Colonies in which he sought to promote loyalty to the British Crown among the American people. He was denounced as a court sycophant and told not to meddle in political affairs. Generally, however, the external opposition to the Methodists declined and they achieved some degree of acceptance. Wesley began to be invited back to the pulpits of the Church of England and by his death in 1791 was receiving more invitations than he could fulfill. In 1777 Wesley wrote in his Journal

Is the offence of the cross ceased? It seems, after
being scandalous near fifty years, I am at length
growing into an honourable man [7].

The number of anti-Methodist publications declined from the 1770's to a negligible number in the 1780's.

The 1770's were dominated by the Calvinistic controversy. This internal battle dominates chapter four of this thesis, and can be seen from the graph to contain most of the anti-Methodist publications which were produced by insiders during the eighteenth century.

The 1790's saw a rise in the number of attacks on Methodism and evangelical belief in general. Green's work contains very few of these

publications and the graph does not truly reflect the number of anti-evangelical writings in the years immediately following the French Revolution of 1789 and more, particularly, the Terror of 1793. The exact figures which should be included here have not been estimated but they fell off as the first decade of the nineteenth century passed and the fear of an equivalent of the French Revolution in England receded.

Thus there were two peaks in the number of external views of the Evangelical Revival --- the early years running down to the Calvinistic Controversy and the Revolutionary period of the 1790's and early nineteenth century. These two peaks will be examined in chapters three and five. The years between these two chapters were dominated by internal squabbles and wranglings which are examined in chapter four.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Richard Hill is known to be the author of several anonymous tracts. For example – A Lash at Enthusiasm: in a Dialogue founded upon real facts, between Mrs Clinker and Miss Martha Steady (1774)
2. Anon – A Discourse concerning Plays and Players. Occasioned by a late and a very extraordinary Sermon, in which some sentiments relative to the above subjects were delivered in a very copious and affecting manner, from the pulpit of a certain popular Preacher of the Society called Methodists (1759) In this work the writer professed to be a Methodist himself.
3. John MacGowan was a local preacher among the Methodists for two years. He wrote The Foundry Budget Opened: or the Arcanum of Wesleyanism Disclosed (1780); Thomas Maxfield was one of Wesley's first lay preachers. His writings included A Vindication of the Rev Mr Maxfield's Conduct, in not continuing with the Rev Mr John Wesley; and of his behaviour since that time. With an Introductory Letter to the Rev Mr George Whitefield (1767); James Relly wrote Antichrist Resisted: In Reply to a pamphlet wrote by W.Mason, intitled Antinomian Heresy Exploded: in an Appeal to the Christian World, against the unscriptural doctrines and licentious tenets of Mr James Relly, advanced in his Treatise of Union (1761). He was a Methodist preacher who seceded from Wesley to found the Rellyan Universalists; John Helton was a preacher for thirteen years until he left Wesley and joined the Quakers. He wrote Reasons for Quitting the Methodist Society. Being a Defence of Barclay's Apology. In answer to a Printed Letter to a person joined with the Quakers. In a Letter to a Friend (1778); Michael Moorhouse was a preacher whose opposition to Wesley was aroused, according to Green, by his exclusion from the Poll Deed of 1784. He wrote An Appeal to Honest Men (1785) and The Defence of Michael Moorhouse.

Written by Himself (1789); William Moore seceded from Wesley and conducted his own services in Plymouth. He wrote An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the Town of Saltash (1785); Samuel Hopkinson, Vicar of Morton, spent several years as a Methodist. He later attacked them in A Sermon Preached at the visitation held at Grantham, May 14. 1798, and dedicated, with due Respect, to the Rev John Pretyman D.D., Archdeacon, and to the Clergy of the Hundred of Beltisloe (1798)

4. Perronet – A Summary View of the Doctrines of Methodism Occasioned by the late persecution of the Methodists at Norwich. Wherein the particulars thereof from time to time are recited; some observations made thereon; together with an Answer to a Letter in the public papers from a Dissenter (1752).
5. Philalethes – A Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London. Occasioned by his Lordship's late Pastoral Letter, and Mr Whitefield's Answer (1739)
6. The Minor was Foote's most successful play in a notable career.
7. Quoted in Lecky - England in the Eighteenth Century (1878) Vol II p69

Chapter Three

1730-1768 : The Early Period

In this chapter the polemic and apologetic writings from the earliest years of the movement to the later second half of the eighteenth century will be examined. In surveying the period it must be realised that although the charges will only be dealt with once during this review, they were continually repeated without adaptation throughout this period. Most of the works appearing in this chapter were not closely reasoned comments based on original research but broad attacks based on other men's opinions, hearsay and garbled reports, made by men who had not examined previous answers to their charges. This genre of writings is best seen in John Wesley's comments in his Journal of 31 August 1770 on the views of Lord Lyttleton:

What does he know of them but from the caricatures drawn by Bishop Lavington and Bishop Warburton? And did he ever give himself the trouble of reading the answers of those warm lively men? Why should a good natured and a thinking man thus condemn whole bodies of men by the lump? In this I can neither read the gentleman, the scholar, nor the Christian.

The various charges will be examined with the aid of a minimum number of pamphlets and answers in order to avoid the repetition of which the eighteenth century was so guilty. However, references to other examples of the charge will be cited.

From the letter which appeared in Fogg's Weekly Journal of December 9, 1732 and for much of the rest of the century one charge was repeatedly laid at the door of the fledgeling movement — that of enthusiasm. In 1739 Dr Edmund Gibson [1] produced The Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter to the People of his Diocese; especially those of the two great Cities of London and Westminster; by way of Caution, against Lukewarmness on one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other (hereafter Pastoral Letter) [2]. Around two-thirds of this Pastoral Letter was on the subject of enthusiasm and was directed against the Methodists (Whitefield in particular). Enthusiasts were derided as those who had:

a strong persuasion on the mind that they are
guided in an extraordinary Manner, by
immediate Impulses and Impressions of the
Spirit of God [3].

Dr Joseph Trapp [4] in his The Nature, Folly, Sin and Danger, Of being Righteous over-much; with a particular VIEW to the Doctrines and Practices Of certain MODERN ENTHUSIASTS... (1739) also sees in enthusiasm a strong but erroneous claim to be divinely inspired [5].

The strength of the charge of enthusiasm can only be appreciated when the eighteenth century background is fully understood. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had seen many changes and turbulent discussions in the religious and political worlds and because of this the eighteenth century had an overwhelming desire for rest. Anyone disturbing this tranquility was almost certain to be denounced as an enthusiast, the most offensive of all aberrations to eighteenth century society and a most effective criticism as it had no specific meaning and required no proof to support it. John Wesley appreciated the vagueness of the term and saw its

power:

I could not well understand for many years how it was that on mentioning any of these great truths, even among men of education, the cry immediately arose, 'An enthusiast, an enthusiast!' But I now plainly perceive this is only an old fallacy in a new shape. To object 'enthusiasm' to any person or doctrine is but a decent method of begging the question. It generally spares the objector the trouble of reasoning, and is a shorter and easier way of carrying the cause [6].

Despite the inexactness of the term, the charge of enthusiasm was made so frequently [7], and had such a grip on the common mind, that it was imperative that the early Methodists replied to it. John Wesley envisaged the enthusiast as one who felt he was under the influence of the Holy Ghost, when, in fact, he was not. Wesley denied that he was such an enthusiast.

The eighteenth century was a rational age and the enthusiast was one who went against a rational bias and looked for guidance elsewhere, an act which disconcerted men who were otherwise not generally averse to Methodism. As Boswell wrote:

Speaking of the inward light to which some Methodists pretended, he [Dr Johnson] said, 'it was a principle utterly incompatible with social or civil society. "If a man" said he "pretends to a principle of action of which I can know nothing, nay, not so much as that he has it, but only that

he pretends to it; how can I tell what that person
may be prompted to do?"[8]

Questions about the Holy Spirit or 'inward light' of the Methodists were widely circulated and replied to in these earlier years. The Rev Mr George Whitefield's Answer to the Bishop of London's last Pastoral Letter (1739) (hereafter Answer) was almost solely concerned with this issue and all other charges were seen to rise from it.

The widely accepted belief in the eighteenth century church which Gibson stated at length was that the first Apostles had been blessed with extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit which enabled them to perform miracles, speak in tongues and prophesy. However, these operations were confined to the Apostles and only the ordinary gifts and influences were available to subsequent men. These gifts and influences were discernible by the effects they had on Christian lives. To claim that any particular act was accomplished by the Holy Spirit was enthusiasm and tantamount to blasphemy. Gibson did not directly accuse the Methodists but left the reader to make up his own mind; other writers [9], however, were not so open-minded and accused the Methodists not only of being enthusiasts but also of pretence to extraordinary revelations of the Holy Spirit.

Both Wesley [10] and Whitefield [11] denied that they laid claim to extraordinary guidance from the Holy Spirit but admitted that they did lay claim to his ordinary gifts and influences which were available to all men in every age [12], and this claim was backed up with quotations from Scripture and the writings of the Early Christian Fathers. Throughout his writings Wesley made references to these two sources along with the Articles, Homilies, Canons and other works of the Established Church in order to show that he stood true to the traditions of Christ and the early Christians as

well as to his own Church.

These two leaders accepted, however, that the work of the Spirit was an internal one and might not be immediately apparent to those around [13] and that confusion might therefore have arisen. As Dr Trapp said:

In short their Argument stands Thus: It is so,
BECAUSE it is so; and they are sure, BECAUSE
they are sure: And what an Argument that is,
let any in his Senses judge [14].

In an age so conscious of propriety, tranquility, and reason, claims of influences which could not be directly demonstrated and proved were certain to be challenged and ridiculed, but Wesley and Whitefield tried in their writings to make their position apparent in the hope of acceptance. They argued that the operations of the Holy Spirit were open to all men and fully consonant with the beliefs of the Church. Whitefield pointed to the obligation upon bishops to recognise a special call or mission from God before ordaining men to the ministry, and Wesley argued that Bishop Pearson, a widely respected writer who had been Bishop of Chester in the previous century, claimed that God reveals himself to all of us and that this is merely part of what all believers should feel through the action of the Holy Spirit [16].

These claims to an inspiration which could not be proved by direct reason often led to charges of spiritual pride on the part of the Methodists. In the anonymous The Doctrines and Divisions of the Methodists (1741) it was stated that:

If we farther ask them for a proof of this
[Inspiration by the Holy Spirit], they also tell us,
that they have it within themselves; but their
Proofs are of such a Nature, that the Worldling

knows nothing of them, and can have no other
 Notion of them than a Man born blind can have
 of Colours. And no one can understand them,
 but he that feels them. So that there is a proud,
 vain, extravagant Boasting of themselves,
 without the least Evidence for a proof [17].

This charge can also be seen elsewhere [18]. Wesley argued that, far from making man spiritually proud, his work led to humility in his followers [19]; Whitefield, however, pointed to his own life and doctrine and hoped that examination of these would lead his accusers to see that a charge of spiritual pride was groundless [20].

Closely allied to this charge was one of leading men into madness. It was claimed that many followers of Wesley and Whitefield had been consigned to Bedlam [21] and that the leaders should follow them [22]. The most famous case appeared in The Life of the Rev Mr George Whitefield (1739) by an Impartial Hand where an account was given of:

Joseph Periam, a young clerk to an attorney,
 who had been converted, partly by reading
 Whitefield's sermons on the new birth, and
 whom his friends had put in a madhouse – (1)
 Because he fasted near a fortnight. (2) Because
 he prayed so as to be heard several storeys high.
 (3) Because he had sold his clothes and given the
 money to the poor [23].

This charge was one which Wesley did not fully counter, holding instead that either these people were mad and a claim to have been influenced by the Methodists was of no value unless supported by external evidence, or they

were under the influence of the Holy Spirit which could have made them appear as mad to the outside world even when they were not. Accusations of driving people mad were merely a repeat of those of enthusiasm in that they went against the prevailing desires of the age for order and tranquility.

The Rev Charles Wheatley, in his sermon preached in St Paul's Cathedral in October 1739 on St John's Test of Knowing Christ and being born of him, spoke of the Methodists as "rapturous enthusiasts, preaching up unaccountable sensations, violent emotions and sudden changes"[24] Bishop Warburton of Gloucester in his On the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit of 1763 was still concerned by the physical extravagances of the Methodists, as many previous writers had been [25]. The preaching of the early Methodists was occasionally accompanied by great physical effects on its hearers; for instance, fainting, crying out loud, falling down as if dead and heavy breathing as if half strangled. Although it is necessary to remember that these physical disturbances only occurred in the very earliest days or in later sudden revivals — Everton 1758, for example — and were never widespread, they did claim great attention as they smacked of great fanaticism which could disturb the prevailing quiet. Whitefield later owned that in earlier years "many young persons ran out before they were called; others were guilty of great imprudences," [26] and Wesley also believed later on that many of these early outbursts had been the work of the devil [27]. At the time, however, Wesley tried to justify these happenings. In his Second Letter to Dr Church (1746) and A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester (1763) Wesley quoted from the Homilies — On Fasting to show that the Church of England was not wholly against physical manifestations [28]. He also argued that since body and soul are closely linked it was not surprising that when the soul was heavily disturbed by a

conviction of sin the body should also be affected, and he also tried to justify the physical excesses on scriptural precedent [29]. Whitefield, on the other hand, showed no worries about the physical outbursts but claimed that they were quite normal. In his Answer he asked Bishop Gibson whether there were sudden or surprising effects accompanying his own preaching and argued that, if the bishop did not have any such effects, he should possibly wonder whether he had any more than a human commission. For Whitefield the effects of his preaching were the results of the inspiration and work of the Holy Spirit among the people, and their absence would have led him to question the origin of his gospel.

This charge was one which was not easily laid to rest. After the wild extravagances of two of Wesley's preachers, Bell and Maxfield, in 1762 Fletcher of Madeley wrote to Charles Wesley:

Allowing what is reported is one half mere exaggeration, the tenth part of the rest shows that spiritual pride, presumption, arrogance, stubbornness, party spirit, uncharitableness, prophetic mistakes, — in short, every sinew of enthusiasm is now at work among them [30].

If Fletcher, a definite supporter of the movement, could have said this about the physical excesses attendant upon a small amount of the earliest preaching, these excesses must have looked far worse to outsiders. In an age of tranquility and reason such actions which showed the surrendering of the body to irrational forces were one of the worst images which early Methodism could have presented — it was enthusiasm and fanaticism at its worst. Despite the protestations and defences of various writers this concern over excessive physical manifestations continued to cling to the Methodist

movement and its leaders were, by the second half of the century, admitting that it had had some truth.

These physical manifestations were often seen as coincident with experiences of instantaneous conversion and it was such conversions which the Methodists were supposed to preach. Dr Trapp stated that Methodists could:

give a ready Answer to that old Fanatic Question:
when and where, at what Place, at what Time, on
what Day of the Month, at what Hour of the Day,
did the spirit come pouring upon you with
irresistible Force and seize you for his own [31]?

Similar accusations were made elsewhere [32]. In reply to these charges Wesley trod a careful path. He denied teaching instantaneous justification, whereby the business of salvation was finished once and for all, claiming instead that he only argued for a gradual improvement in grace and goodness [33]. However he did point to the Acts of the Apostles and argued that in almost all of them a forgiveness of sins, of which faith was the evidence, was received in single moment [34]. He was careful to avoid appearing as an enthusiastical supporter of extraordinary doctrines yet carefully asserted his doctrines and beliefs in faith being given in a moment. The terror of this charge was that a claim to instantaneous transformation in a moment of spiritual or, rarely, physical turmoil did not demonstrate reason but that irrational enthusiasm with which Wesley did not wish to be associated.

All the charges dealt with so far can be grouped under the title of enthusiasm. It is now necessary to turn to the charges, commonly made, that Methodism was in breach of Church order. The Church of England was

seen as a well ordered Society and, by breaching its written rules, the Methodists were promoting Schism. The Methodist meetings were seen by some critics to be contrary to the Toleration Act whose protection they did not at first claim.

The method of propagation of the Gospel for the early Methodists was by field preaching, which offended the eighteenth century ideals of decency and order. Rev Robert Seagrave, in his An Answer to the Reverend Dr Trapp's four Sermons against Mr Whitefield, showing the Sin and Folly of being Angry over-much, (1739) noted that the opposition to Methodism only really arose after they started to preach in the fields, whereupon they were immediately called imposters, enthusiasts and novelists [35]. A correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine complained that Whitefield:

immediately after his Ordination to the Priesthood, without a Licence from any Bishop, contrary, to all the Rules of the Christian church, contrary to the Canon and Constitution of our own Church, which so lately gave him his Orders, contrary to the Laws of the Land, he goes strolling about the Kingdom, shewing the greatest Contempt for our excellent Liturgy and all Forms of Prayer [36].

Wesley admitted that he turned to field-preaching not through direct choice but because he had been forbidden, although by common practice and not an official pronouncement, to preach in a church. He argued that the preaching itself was what mattered and not the pulpit situation.

Gibson, in his Observations [37], argued that a priest was limited to preaching to the congregation to which he had been appointed and that

itinerant field-preaching was contrary to the Laws of the Church. In return, Wesley argued that, when he was writing, the closest approximation to such a limitation (Canon 50 [38]) was not generally observed [39]. In The Case of the Methodists Briefly Stated of 1744 Gibson argued that the Conventicle Act of 1670 was designed to forbid field-preaching by name [40]. However Wesley replied that the title of the Act demonstrated that it was designed to counter those who were promoting sedition. He denied this in himself and said that, since the act was not relevant to him, it did not forbid his field-preaching [41]. Here Wesley was walking carefully round the edge of a trap which Gibson had set for him. The penalties of the Conventicle Act of 1670 were set aside by the Toleration Act of 1689, which granted freedom of worship to Dissenting Protestants, so that if Wesley had argued that the penalties of the Conventicle Act no longer applied he would have implied that he sought toleration under the later act. Many of the opponents of the Methodists felt that the latter were, in fact, dissenting from the Established Church and that, in order to remain inside the Law, the Methodists should register themselves under its protection [42]. However, Wesley stringently denied that he dissented from the Church and, therefore, had no need of the protection of the Toleration Act. He wrote:

(1) That Act grants toleration to those who dissent from the established Church. But we do not dissent from it; therefore we cannot make use of that Act; (2) That Act exempts Dissenters from penalties consequent on their breach of preceding laws. But we are not conscious of breaking any law at all; therefore we need not make use of it [43].

It is necessary to examine the various points on which it was argued that the Methodists varied from the Established Church. General charges of schism were widespread [44]. Wesley countered such accusations by pointing to the Established Church definition of itself in the nineteenth of Thirty-Nine Articles, where it was stated that:

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same... [45]

Wesley argued that his preaching had increased the number of faithful in England and had also increased the amount of "preaching of the pure word of God", and the administration of the sacraments, particularly the Lord's supper. He asked his accusers to examine the numbers attending both the sacraments and preaching in London, Bristol and Newcastle and challenged them to deny that these had increased since the Methodists had started. Hence not only did Wesley deny undermining the Church of England but he also claimed actively to support it along the terms of the Church's definition of itself [46].

Wesley and his followers were also accused [47] of breaking the Canons, the written Laws of the Established Church. Wesley, however, denied that he was bound to observe the Canons because, he claimed, they had never been legally established by the Church [48]. In spite of this, though, he was charged by Trapp with breaking Canons 72 and 73 [49]; by Gibson of breaking Canon 28 [50]; and also of breaking one concerning extemporary prayer [51]. These charges were uncomfortable for Wesley and

he did not tackle them directly, preferring instead to point out that the King's ratification of the Canons obliged a minister to read them to his congregation annually and asked whether any were actually doing this. He cited Canons 29, 59, 64, 68 and 75 which dealt with various matters including the playing of dice and cards by clergymen, fasting, and the instruction of the youth and ignorants of the parish by the clergy. Wesley admitted that he did not observe all the Canons but, along the lines of John 8, verse 7, he called on those who had observed the canons to cast the first stone. A similar argument was used to counter charges of breaking the rubrics of the Church of England which often accompanied charges of breaking the canons [52]. Wesley denied that he undermined the Established Church by failing to observe its regulations and printed formularies; on the contrary, he claimed to adhere to these more closely than his fellow clergymen. William Grimshaw, the incumbent of Haworth and friend of Wesley, argued in his 1749 An Answer to a Sermon Lately published against the Methodists by the Rev Mr George White, M.A. Minister of Colne and Marsden, in Lancashire that the neglect of the doctrines and regulations of the Established Church were the reasons for its present evils and that the Methodists were only reviving the heritage of the Church. He cited a clergyman who refused to allow the Homilies to be read in his church for fear that his congregation would all turn Methodist [53].

It was also argued that the Methodists left the Church and caused divisions within it by refusing to submit to obey the governors of that Church as they had sworn to do at their ordination — field preaching in particular was seen as an offence against this. Wesley argued that he obeyed the governors of the Church in all matters of an indifferent nature, in accordance with his ordination, but that these same ordination vows forced

him at times to go against his superiors:

It is 'the burden of the Lord' which is laid upon us here; and we are 'to obey God rather than man'. Nor yet do we in any ways violate the promise which each of us made when it was said unto him, 'take the authority of our ordinary'. But we did not, could not promise to obey such injunctions as we know are contrary to the Word of God [54].

Wesley argued that he was a faithful member of the Church of England but that his mission to spread the Gospel came first, and concluded that if this required a setting aside of the regulations of the Church then so be it.

Wesley's final argument in denial of a charge of leaving or dividing the Church was to point to the fact that he combined the faithful [55] in societies and that all members of his societies attended the services of the Established Church and that those who failed to do this were excluded from the societies [56]. Wesley's continual profession of loyalty to the Church in all forms which were not contrary to the word of God in the face of numerous charges which he attempted to rebuff through dissection and quotation from the Church's own writing and scripture is demonstrative of the rigid style of the man.

Whitefield's profession of loyalty in the face of the numerous charges previously cited was to assert that:

My constant way of preaching is, first to prove my Propositions by Scripture, and then to illustrate them by the Articles and Collects of the Church of England. Those that have heard me

can witness how often I have exhorted them to be
constant at the Publick Service of the Church. I
attend on it my self, and would read the Publick
Liturgy every Day, if your Lordships Clergy
would give me leave [57].

Thus it has been shown that the early Methodists denied trying to damage or undermine the Church in any way, but that they were not above criticising its ministers. Whitefield saw some of them as "indolent, Earthly-minded, Pleasure-taking Brethren,"[58] Wesley [59] and Seagrave [60] also criticised them. There was undoubtedly some truth in this accusation but it smacked of spiritual pride and they were brought to task. Gibson's Pastoral Letter said:

they who go about to represent the Parochial
Clergy as unable or unwilling to teach their
People aright, are so far answerable for
defeating the good effects their ministry might
otherwise have [61].

All the charges advanced against early Methodism which have been discussed so far can be lumped together as purely religious. Not all the charges advanced were, however, of this type.

P.Q. in his essay Of the pernicious Nature and Tendency of Methodism (1739) [62] was alarmed that Whitefield, by his preaching, could draw crowds of five or six thousand colliers at Kingswood. He suspected that the result of this would be a decrease in the labour of the colliers and a resulting increase in the price of coal. Elsewhere it was stated that the Foundry at Moorfields was equipped with spinning wheels where young runaways could work without any questions being asked [63]; the general

thrust of these charges being that the Methodists were breaking up families, disrupting labour and generally bringing society to confusion [64]. Wesley argued in return that the true religion which he preached would not lead to a fragmentation in society but, rather, would lead men to discharge their duties in society with the strictest diligence and closest attention, and that his preaching would make all men happy with their station on earth and lead to greater regard for the duties consequent on their station [65].

The accusation of social disruption was part of a wider, and more damning, one of sedition. P.Q. argued that, in undermining the Established Church, the Methodists were seeking to disrupt the civil government of the State [66]. Gibson, too was worried by this possibility in Observations and more particularly in his 1744 The Case of the Methodists Briefly Stated where, as it has already been shown, he argued that field-preaching was contrary to the Act of Toleration. Because of the numbers this preaching was reaching Gibson suggested its true motive was to promote sedition and was, therefore, a serious danger to the State.

One of the strangest charges levelled at the early Methodists was that of Romanism. The classic statement of this charge was Bishop Lavington of Exeter's Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compar'd, the three volumes of which appeared between 1749 and 1754. It included a history of Catholic spirituality from its earliest roots and, by comparing this with the writings of the Methodists, Lavington, hoped to prove that the Methodists were Papists in disguise and should be treated accordingly. This accusation was not new. In the Gentleman's Magazine of 1739 it was noted that a certain Monsieur De La Quadra, a Spanish Jesuitical Minister, had become a Methodist [67].

Catholicism was not only a hated religion but all its adherents were branded as Jacobites who could be expected to rise to overthrow the present

King and government and replace them with a Pretender. In 1744 Charles Wesley was charged with using treasonous words, after having asked "that God would bring home his banished ones", [68] and this was construed as support for the Jacobite cause. Thus Romanism was a religious charge which had strong political overtones. Here as throughout the eighteenth century the two spheres were interrelated

However the early Methodists often professed their loyalty to the King and government. One anonymous writer argued for Whitefield's loyalty in that he constantly prayed for the King and his family and urged obedience and submission to the civil magistrate [69]. In 1744 Wesley produced a Loyal Address to the King and similar professions of loyalty also appear elsewhere [70]. Yet the resilience of this charge of covert Catholicism can be seen in the number of anti-Methodist publications which appeared in years of political tension, as has already been noticed, and Wesley's decision in 1744 to delay his departure from London when all Catholics had been ordered to leave the city, for fear that such an action would countenance the charge.

Another charge was advanced by the Rev George White in his A Sermon against the Methodists (1748) which suggested that Wesley preached for worldly gain and had an income similar to that of most bishops [71]. Wesley could not answer this accusation for himself so Grimshaw replied that Wesley was barely able to provide the necessities for himself [72].

It is now necessary to draw the various charges and the answers made to them together to see how the men of this time saw what was going on around them. The charges of worldly gain, disruption of industry, the family and the Constitution were social, economic and political accusations. Most of the indictments of Methodism dealt with in this chapter have been religious accusations which can be grouped as relating to charges of

enthusiasm or irregularity leading to a destruction of Church order. At this point the Evangelical Revival was seen in an almost wholly religious dimension by its opponents; Gibson and his fellows were combatting what they saw as a danger to religious order and, therefore to society.

Interestingly the question of religious orthodoxy was only really raised on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and this was because the Methodist doctrine of the spirit was seen to give rise to various manifestations which disturbed the religious order and were termed as enthusiasm. The Methodists were abused because they disturbed religious order at a time when such order was sacred.

The early members of the Evangelical Revival certainly saw their work in religious and not social or political terms. They saw themselves as preaching the true doctrine of the Church of England which needed to be preached as it was not being done elsewhere. As Whitefield wrote:

Salvation (if the Gospel be true) is the free Gift of
 God through Jesus Christ. Faith is the means
 whereby that Salvation is applied to our Hearts,
 and good Works are the Necessary Fruits and
 Proof of that Faith. This, my Lord, is the
 Doctrine of Jesus Christ; This is the Doctrine of
 the Church of England; and it is because the
 Generality of the Clergy of the Church of
 England do not preach this Doctrine, that, I am
 resolved, God being my Helper, to continue
 instant in Season and out of Season, to declare it
 unto all Men, let the Consequences, as to my own
 private Person, be what they will [73].

All the early Methodists would have concurred with Whitefield's single minded intent; to proclaim the Gospel, as they saw it, whatever the consequences. They saw themselves as united with one intent, and were similarly seen as a single entity from outside. The attacks on Methodism were addressed to Mr Whitefield or Mr Wesley depending on whom the writer saw as the leader of the movement and occasionally to both at once; but the contents suggested nothing other than the idea of the early Methodists as an homogenous group.

The view of the Evangelical Revival in this period is also static. The charges laid at the door of Methodism by men such as Trapp and Gibson, along with the Gentleman's Magazine in 1739 and the early 1740's can still be seen almost unchanged in Warburton and the other writers of the 1760's though their frequency had died down. The London Magazine of 1761 called Wesley "an enemy to religion, and a deceiver of the people" [74], and "Methodism... a spurious mixture of enthusiasm and blasphemy, popery and quakerism" [75] whose participants could "with as much reason be considered good sons of the Church, as an unruly boy that runs away from his parents may be deemed a dutiful, obedient child." [76] Nor had Wesley's position moved; in answer to one objection he referred his accuser to previous answers "not having the leisure to say the same thing ten times over." [77]

In the first decades of the Evangelical Revival it was seen as a united, static and religious movement both within and outside itself. Even its consequences in the social realm were seen in religious terms. Speaking of the results of his preaching Wesley said:

The habitual drunkard, that was, is now
temperate in all things. The whoremonger now
flees fornication. He that stole steals no more,

but cooks with his hands. He that cursed or swore, perhaps at every sentence, has now learned to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence. Those formerly enslaved to various habits of sin are now brought to uniform habits of holiness [78].

He asked that the Methodists be judged by the results of their preaching.

Notes on Chapter Three

1. Edmund Gibson D.D. (1669–1748) was a man of great ability and learning. In 1713 he had produced the Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani which had established him as the greatest living expert on English Ecclesiastical Law. Gibson was also Walpole's chief advisor on religious affairs. His comments are of the highest importance owing to the high regard paid to him. As Bishop of London he oversaw the religious life of the American colonies and was, therefore, Whitefield's diocesan — thereby adding to the weight of his words.
2. The importance of this work can be seen in the fact that it reached a tenth edition by 1768 and was still being republished in 1812.
3. Gibson — Pastoral Letter p19
4. Joseph Trapp D.D. was the first Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He held two livings in the city of London — Christ Church, Newgate Street and St Leonard, Foster Lane.
5. Trapp — Of being Righteous over-much... pp39–40
6. The Works of John Wesley (Oxford Edition) (hereafter Works) XI p170
7. The charge appeared in almost every one of the 83 works Green lists for 1739 and continued to be used throughout the century.
8. Boswell — Life of Johnson — Vol 1 p385
9. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) pp240–1, 256 or Trapp — Of being Righteous over-much... p39–40
10. Works XI pp139, 476
11. Whitefield — Answer pp44–5
12. Works XI p163
13. Whitefield — Answer p45 ; Works XI p108

14. Trapp – Of being Righteous over-much... p42
15. Whitefield – Answer pp51–2
16. Works XI p167
17. Gentleman's Magazine (1741) pp320–2
18. Trapp – Of being Righteous over-much... p32; Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect usually distinguished by the Name of Methodists p10. This anonymous pamphlet was published in 1744 and it has always been assumed that Edmund Gibson was its author. Wesley saw this as an important attack and replied to it at length in A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Part 1.
19. Works XI p126
20. Whitefield – Answer pp54–5
21. The Bethlehem hospital for lunatics in Bishopsgate.
22. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p239; (1741) p320
23. See Tyerman – The Life and Times of John Wesley (1870–1) (hereafter Life of Wesley) Vol I p247. An Impartial hand is generally acknowledged to have been Rev J. Tucker, Curate of All Saints, Bristol and afterwards Dean of Gloucester, who frequently wrote against the Methodists.
24. See Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol I p288
25. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p321; Observations p10
26. Overton – The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century (1886) p179
27. Wesley – Journal 25/9/1759, 4/6/1772
28. "When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell: they tremble, quake and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart... So that nothing liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both

with words and behaviour of body to show themselves weary of life." Works XI pp196-7, 526

29. Mark 9 verse 20: "So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth."

30. Tyerman - Life of Wesley Vol II p437

31. Trapp - Of being Righteous over-much p42

32. Gibson - Pastoral Letter p46 : Gentleman's Magazine (1741) pp320-1

33. Works XI p338

34. Works XI pp70-1

35. Tyerman - Life of Wesley Vol I p213. Robert Seagrave (1693-1760) was ordained but held no specific cure.

36. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p240.

37. Observations pp11-12

38. Canon 50 - Strangers not admitted to Preach without showing their Licence: Neither the Minister, Church-wardens, nor any other Officers of the Church, shall suffer any Man to Preach within their Churches or Chapels, but such as by showing their Licence to Preach, shall appear unto them to be sufficiently Authorized thereunto, as is aforesaid.

39. Works XI pp183-4

40. Gibson - The Case of the Methodists Briefly Stated pp1-2

41. Works XI p180

42. Trapp - Of being Righteous over-much p38; Gentleman's Magazine (1739) pp240-1

43. Works XI p179

44. Gentleman's Magazine (1739 and 1741)

45. Nineteenth Article - The Book of Common Prayer (1662) p619

46. Works XI p78-9
47. Trapp - Of being Righteous over-much... p59; Observations pp5-6
48. The 141 Canons were being drawn up by Bancroft, while he was Bishop of London (1597-1604). They were adopted by the Convocation of Canterbury in 1604 and the Convocation of York in 1606, though their application was limited in certain places by an Act of Parliament in 1606. Wesley's claim that they were not binding probably rests upon the fact that the see of Canterbury was vacant when the Canterbury Convocation adopted them in 1604. The Canons were generally assumed to be binding.
49. Trapp - Of being Righteous over-much... p59
50. Observations p5
51. Works XI pp185-6
52. For arguments on all this section see Works XI pp79-81
53. Heitzenrater - The Elusive Mr Wesley (1984) Vol II pp79-80
54. Works XI pp81-2
55. See the Nineteenth Article of Thirty-Nine Articles
56. Works XI pp82-3
57. Whitefield - Answer p46
58. Whitefield - Answer p55
59. Works XI p75
60. See Tyerman - Life of Wesley I p214
61. Gibson - Pastoral Letter p41
62. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p257
63. Gentleman's Magazine (1741) p320
64. See also Trapp - Of being Righteous over-much... p37; Observations p9; Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p128
65. Works XI p346

66. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p257
67. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p242
68. Lecky – England in the Eighteenth Century – Vol II pp581–2
69. Gentleman's Magazine (1739) p359
70. Works XI p315
71. Heitzenrater – The Elusive Mr Wesley –Vol II p76
72. Heitzenrater – The Elusive Mr Wesley –Vol II p80
73. Whitefield – Answer p55
74. London Magazine (1761) p36
75. London Magazine (1761) p91
76. London Magazine (1761) p35
77. Works XI p391
78. Works XI p350

Chapter Four

1739-1778 : The Internal Disputes

The last chapter closed by saying that the early Evangelicals presented a united front to the world. There was, however, one exception to this which must be dealt with before moving to the later history of the Evangelical Revival, where divisions in the movement became apparent to all.

In 1739 Wesley published a sermon on Free Grace based on Romans 8 verse 32. In this he laid down his belief in the principle of "the grace or love of God... FREE IN ALL, and FREE FOR ALL" [1]. He then proceeded to produce a precise definition of the doctrine of predestination, which he summed up as follows :

by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable,
irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind
are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly
damned; it being impossible that any of the
former should be damned or that any of the latter
should be saved [2].

The rest of the pamphlet outlined Wesley's objections to the doctrine of predestination; first, that it made preaching irrelevant, as with or without it people remained infallibly saved or damned, and second, that it destroyed the holiness to which God pointed by taking away the first motive to follow after holiness, that of hope of heaven or fear of hell. Third, it destroyed meekness and encouraged sharpness of temper on the part of those who felt that they were saved towards these whom they saw as separated from God. Fourth, it

destroyed the comfort of religion. Fifth, it destroyed the zeal for good works. Sixth, it tended to overthrow Christian revelation by rendering it unnecessary. Seventh, it was grounded on interpretations of various biblical texts which were in direct contradiction to other verses and, indeed, contrary to the whole tenor of the Gospel. Finally, it was blasphemous as it portrayed Christ as a hypocrite in promising a love which he did not possess being instead more unjust and cruel than the devil.

Wesley and Whitefield were well aware of their differences in this field of belief and discussed it in their letters, but, as Whitefield wrote from America in March 1740, there was little point in publicly disputing the fact:

why then should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not, in the end, destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul, which I pray God may always subsist between us? How glad would the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided!... How would the cause of our common Master suffer by our raising disputes about particular points of doctrine [3].

By September, however, he was aware of two anonymous pamphlets which had appeared in London. These were Free Grace Indeed! A Letter to the Reverend Mr John Wesley. relating to his sermon against absolute election, published under the title of Free Grace (1740) and The Controversy concerning Freewill and Predestination: in a Letter to a Friend. Recommended to Mr Whitefield and his followers (1740). They added to the warmth of the dispute through personal abuse but did nothing to clear the situation.

To remain true to his position Whitefield was forced, against his will, to publish; as he announced in the opening remarks of his A Letter to the Rev Mr Wesley In answer to his sermon entitled Free Grace (1740):

I frankly confess that Jonah could not give more reluctance against Nineveh, than I now take pen in hand to write against you. Was nature to speak, I had rather die than do it; and yet if I am faithful to God, and to my own and others' souls, I must stand neuter no longer. I am very apprehensive that our common adversaries rejoice to see us differing among ourselves. But what can I say? The children of God are in danger of falling into error [4].

Whitefield argued that Romans 8, upon which Wesley had based his sermon, referred to the privileges of those who already belonged to Christ and that it was Wesley and not he himself who had misinterpreted Scripture. He then proceeded to answer all Wesley's objections point by point, by reference to Scripture and the Church of England's Articles on Original Sin, Free-Will, Predestination and Election [5]. This was a carefully phrased and polite yet firm assertion of Whitefield's belief. Despite the politeness there can, however, be little doubt that the two were divided. The two men agreed to differ and were quite open about it. Two fake letters which the leaders were supposed to have written illustrate the point:

Dear George, I have read what you have written on predestination, and God has taught me to see that you are wrong and that I am right. Yours affectionately, J. Wesley.

Dear John, I have read what you have written on
predestination, and God has taught me that I
am right and you are wrong. Yours
affectionately, G. Whitefield [6].

These differences between Wesley and Whitefield remained and neither changed their views during the debate in any way. However, the outward divisions were played down, with the friendship of the two men quickly re-established and remaining throughout their lives. The theological differences were set aside and all Methodists returned to their prime work of propagating the Gospel throughout the land, and, for Whitefield, throughout America as well. There was an unwritten agreement to leave off the doctrine of Predestination, and the issue was finally settled at the 1744 Methodist Conference.

Chronologically this dispute belongs in the previous chapter but has been included here for several reasons. Despite their doctrinal differences those inside the movement saw themselves as united in a great work but were seen by outsiders as united as a disruptive forces in religion, and this view was not altered in the short period during which Wesley and Whitefield argued over predestination. This episode was the first of several which led to the fierce controversy of the 1770's which provides the main focus of this chapter and, as it must be seen as a important forerunner of that violence, has been included here.

The next disagreement within the movement centred around Rev James Hervey's Theron and Aspasio (1755) [7]. On its publication in 1755 Hervey had received a long letter from Wesley criticising the work, and in 1758 Wesley published this critique in Preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion. Hervey was, not surprisingly, offended by this publication and

prepared a reply to Wesley. He died on Christmas Day 1758, having left explicit instructions that this reply should not be published as it was only half ready for the press. But through the action of Rev William Cudworth [8], in possession of a manuscript of the reply, it appeared in 1764 and was published again, by Hervey's brother, in 1765 as Aspasio Vindicated. Eleven Letters from the late Rev Mr Hervey to the Rev Mr John Wesley containing an answer to that Gentleman's Remarks on Theron and Aspasio. These letters of Hervey argued that Wesley had openly avowed many of the opinions which he condemned in Theron and Aspasio. It was a Calvinistic reply, as would be expected, but was generally couched in mild but fair language. Wesley replied in the same year with A Treatise on Justification, extracted from Mr John Goodwin; with a preface, wherein all that is material, in letters just published under the name of the Rev Mr Hervey, is answered (1765). He showed his admiration of Hervey's work and stated that he had only felt it necessary to point out the limitations of the work because he was recommending it to others. His tone towards the dead Hervey was one of respect and he saw the personal accusations made in the Letters as the work of Cudworth, who had recently died. Wesley's reply was polite but it was no longer a personal and private disagreement, it had become public property, and a small pamphlet war broke out [9] Until this point the dispute had been pursued in a dignified manner, but with the entry of Sellon [10] into the lists Christian courtesy rapidly disappeared. One extract alone is enough to demonstrate this:

Mr Hervey was deeply sunk into antinomianism;
and had he lived much longer would, in all
probability, have done much mischief. Managed
by W. Cudworth, that weak man drew his pen,

dipped in antinomian venom, and wrote with the utmost bitterness against his friend, to whom he lay under various and great obligations [11].

The discussion of Theron and Aspasio ceased after 1765 but a precedent for abusive writing had been set and the old wound over Calvinist doctrine had been re-opened. The disagreements started to appear in public in small quantities. In 1766 The Gospel Magazine published A Dialogue between the Foundery and the Tabernacle, occasioned by the late publication of the Rev Mr John Wesley's sermon upon 'Imputed Righteousness'[12]

Throughout this period, Wesley had also been working to bring about an end to the dispute by forming a union of evangelical clergy [13]. As early as 1758-9 Wesley was meeting as many evangelicals or potential evangelicals as he could during his travels. The question of a union was first raised at the conference of 1757. Unions of evangelical clergy already existed on a local basis such as that led by Samuel Walker, Vicar of Truro, in Cornwall and Wesley sought to make these national. A great ally to Wesley in his meetings with the clergy was the Countess of Huntingdon who invited Wesley to join her ministers at several prayer meetings in Downing Street, London. In order to promote union various evangelical clergymen were invited to attend Wesley's Methodist Conference in 1761 and 1762. 1763 saw Howell Harris spending three months touring England in an attempt to elicit support for Wesley's plans.

However, after six years of work towards the sought after union, Wesley had achieved very little. He had been very politely received but was no closer to a union of evangelical clergy. On 19 April 1764, while at Scarborough, he wrote a circular letter addressed to about fifty clergymen as a final attempt to promote Christian union. In it he outlined the beginnings

of a great work in England but regretted that, as the work had grown, so had the differences between those involved in it. He called on the various clergymen to unite in three essentials — original sin, justification by faith and holiness of life. He accepted that union could not be achieved on doctrinal matters, as some would be strict Calvinists and others Arminians, and also that it could not be achieved on the question of outward order, and so proposed a union of spirit and intent in which members would:

Never speak disrespectfully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other; never repeat each other's faults, mistakes or infirmities, much less listen for and gather them up; never say or do anything to hinder each other's usefulness, either directly or indirectly [14].

He argued that such a union was the duty of the clergy and would lead to increased success in their work:

Would it not be far better for the people, who suffer from the clashings and contentions of their leaders, which seldom fail to occasion many unprofitable, yea hurtful, disputes among them? Would it not be better even for the poor blind world, robbing them of their sport, 'Oh, they cannot agree themselves!' Would it not be better for the whole work of God, which would deepen and widen on every side [15]?

Despite the apparent sense of Wesley's proposal it fell on stony ground. The Countess of Huntingdon continued to show keenness but her supporters did not, and so Wesley began to see that his plan was not going to be fulfilled.

Finally the dispute broke out again during the late 1760's. The minutes of the 1769 Methodist Conference opened:

My dear brethren

It has long been my desire that all those ministers of our Church who believe and preach salvation by faith might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder but help one another.

After occasionally pressing this in private conversation whenever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head and sent them to each in a letter. Out of fifty or sixty to whom I wrote only three vouchsafed me an answer. So I give this up. I can do no more.

They are a rope of sand: and such they will continue [16].

Wesley had tried to unite all evangelical Protestants in order to aid their work in proclaiming the gospel and prevent further dissension, but was forced to admit defeat. A dispute was already in progress which would lead to further divisions among them.

In 1768 six students were expelled from St Edmund Hall, Oxford, for being Methodists. They were defended by Sir Richard Hill in his Pietas Oxoniensis, or a full and impartial account of the expulsion of six students from St Edmunds Hall By a Master of Arts of the University of Oxford. As well as defending the students, Hill argued strongly in favour of the doctrine of predestination. He also dug up some interesting facts from the pasts of various eminent members of the Church, which forced Oxford University to reply in the shape of Dr Nowell, with the authority of the Vice-Chancellor.

In his An Answer to a Pamphlet entitled Pietas Oxoniensis (1768) Thomas Nowell showed from Article 17 that predestination was not the doctrine of the Church of England. By 1769 Augustus Toplady [16] had entered the lists by publishing The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism (1769) and The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted With a Preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes Translated in great measure from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius among others (1769). He was also joined by Walter Sellon, who supported Wesley and Arminianism in The Church of England Vindicated from the charge of Absolute Predestination : as it is stated and asserted by the Translator of Jerome Zanchius, in his Letter to the Rev Dr Nowell (1770).

Tyerman stated that "Controversial war was now begun in earnest, and a severer battle was never fought" [18]. Sellon had entered the combat on Wesley's side, the older man refusing to do so himself. But in 1770 Wesley made sure that the controversy continued and reached new bitterness. His Sermon on Free Grace had started the disputes, his comments on Hervey's Theron and Aspasio had rekindled it after it had lain dormant for over twenty-five years, and he now ensured that it continued in the doctrinal minutes of the 1770 Conference, where the theological theses which had led to a patching-up of the quarrel at the 1744 Conference were re-examined.

The minutes opened by declaring that the 1744 minutes had leaned too far towards Calvinism. Wesley gave eight points of disagreement with the earlier minutes, comments which tended to convey an impression of salvation by works, though Wesley had never held this view. The third of his points read:

We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification'. Nothing can

be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well'. Whoever repents should do 'works meet for repentance'. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for [19]?

There can be no doubt that Wesley had been annoyed by the Calvinist tracts of Richard Hill and more particularly Toplady, and this probably led him to produce such unguarded minutes, whose offensiveness to Calvinist sensibilities he must have perceived. He was responsible for letting slip the dogs of war. The Calvinistic Methodists were deeply offended. The Countess of Huntingdon declared that those who supported the minutes should leave her new college at Trevecca. Joseph Benson, who had taught Classics, left and proceeded to defend them. The publication of the minutes also resulted in all those who had previously supported both Wesley and Calvinist doctrines leaving the Methodist leader at this point. Wesley had also published an abridgement of one of Toplady's pamphlets in The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and Asserted By the Rev Mr A— T— (1769). Wesley intended to show the errors in Toplady's doctrine by a brief paragraph of summary at the end:

The sum of all is this: One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned.

Witness my hand.

A— T— [20].

Toplady was irate and rushed to the press with a venomous pamphlet. His temper was not improved by Wesley's next action. In a letter of June 24, 1770

Wesley described Toplady as a chimney sweep who was too dirty a writer to bother with, and he left him to be dealt with by others. To be turned over to a subordinate was a difficult pill for Toplady to swallow — Wesley had made a bitter enemy who was not to cease printing works against him until he died in 1778.

At the Conference of 1771 Wesley made an attempt to gain peace. He drew up a declaration saying that the minutes of the previous year had not been carefully worded and, instead of believing in justification by works as had been suggested, they abhorred this doctrine and trusted in nothing but the merits of Christ for their justification or sanctification. This was signed by Wesley and fifty-three of his preachers. The Countess of Huntingdon and Rev Shirley [21], two of the principle objectors to the minutes, also wrote in conciliatory tone and the matter could have been laid to rest, as Toplady would surely have followed suit. Wesley had encouraged a conciliation at the Conference, but at the same time, he was working to continue the controversy, as his letter to the Countess of Huntingdon of August 14, 1771 shows [22].

Immediately the Conference had finished Wesley had Fletcher's Vindication of the Rev Mr Wesley's Last Minutes: occasioned by a circular, printed letter, inviting principal persons, both clergy and laity, as well as of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, who disapprove of those Minutes to oppose them in a body, as a dreadful heresy: in Five Letters to the Hon and Rev Author of the circular letter published (1771) [23]. This work outlined Wesley's doctrines, commented on the design of the minutes, and attempted to vindicate their propositions. Fletcher also produced extracts of Shirley's sermons to show that Wesley and Shirley were in agreement in necessities. He closed by deploring the disagreements and rueing the time

wasted:

O sir, have we not fightings enough without, to
employ all our time and strength Must we also
declare war and promote fightings within? Must
we catch at every opportunity to stab one another
[24]?

Such sentiments were typical of Fletcher who, as the controversy continued, wrote to the Countess of Huntingdon regretting the pain and unhappiness he had caused and wishing that he had never written in vindication of Wesley's minutes [25]. Indeed throughout these unhappy disputes Fletcher was the one man who retained a sense of Christian charity and did not descend to vitriolic abuse. His saintly nature was appreciated by all.

Shirley replied to Fletcher in his Narrative of the Principal Circumstances relative to the Rev Mr Wesley's late Conference, held in Bristol, August 6, 1771 (1771), in which he admitted to have held the doctrines of Wesley's minutes but claimed that this was in earlier unenlightened years and that he no longer held such views. Much of the work was concerned with the circumstances surrounding the publication of Fletcher's work, and Wesley was portrayed as the villain of the piece in forcing the publication contrary to Fletcher's wishes. Whatever the truth of the matter, the conciliation made at the 1771 Conference was now forgotten. Fletcher replied in his A Second Check to Antinomianism: occasioned by a late narrative, in the three letters, to the Hon and Rev author (1771) to which Shirley did not reply; however, the field was not left empty.

Richard Hill produced Five Letters to the Reverend Mr Fletcher, relative to his Vindication of the Minutes of the Reverend Mr John Wesley (1771). For our purposes the most notable part of this work was its close

where Hill ended on a most charitable note:

And now, dear sir, I cannot conclude these letters without expressing my earnest desire, that the contents of them may never cause any decrease of love and Christian fellowship between us. Pardon then, my dear sir, I ardently beseech you, O pardon all that you have found amiss in these epistles, or in the unworthy author of them, and much I am sure your charity will have to overlook. If we cannot see things alike now, I hope the time is not far off when we shall be thoroughly united in sentiment, as well as in heart, and each of us casting our crowns before the throne, shall join our voices in that one harmonious song of praise with which the regions of bliss shall echo without intermission, and without end... [26]

This was replied to by Fletcher in A Third Check to Antinomianism; In a Letter to the Author of Pietas Oxonensis (1771).

Thus far the controversy has been examined in detail but a continuation of this will shed little light on the intentions of this chapter; rather, a brief synopsis will suffice. Green recorded a total of sixty-four publications issued by both sides in this internecine warfare between 1771 and 1778 [27]. In 1776 few pamphlets were issued by either side, but since Wesley was heavily attacked by his wife there was no need for further attacks. She having recently left him had reinterpreted some of his letters and made them public property.

The works so far portrayed in this chapter have been of a fairly polite nature but it is now necessary to redress the balance. The manner of conduct of most of the participants in the so-called Calvinistic Controversy was the root of its harm to the Evangelical Revival. As has been shown disagreements on doctrinal matters had existed from the earliest days, but until the 1770's they were subdued to allow other more important work to continue. When warfare finally did break out it was carried on in the most abusive language to the detriment of the propagation of the evangelical Gospel.

At the forefront of this was Toplady and his Gospel Magazine, which directed an unceasing stream of abuse at Wesley and other Arminians, and gave glowing reviews of the various works in support of Calvinism. Two extracts from Gospel Magazine will be sufficient to illustrate the point without labouring it. The first is a poem — "The Serpent and the Fox: or an interview between Old Nick and Old John":

There's a fox, who resideth hard by
The most perfect, and holy, and sly,
That e'er turned a coat, or could pilfer a lye [28].

The second is a review of Imposture Detected, and the dead vindicated: In a letter to a friend. Containing some gentle strictures on the false and libellous harangue, lately delivered by Mr John Wesley, upon laying the first stone of his new Dissenting Meeting-House, near the City Road (1777) by Rowland Hill and it reads:

Hob in the well again; or Pope John once more in
the suds! Seldom has literary punishment been
administered with greater keenness and spirit,
than in this pamphlet; and surely, never was a

punishment administered on a juster occasion,
 nor to a more deserving delinquent. When you
 take Old Nick by the nose it must be with a pair of
 red hot tongs [29].

However, the abusive and un-christian language was not confined to the Calvinist side. Toplady's abuse was backed up by the brothers Sir Richard and Rowland Hill for the Calvinists but was equalled by Rev Walter Sellon and Thomas Olivers for the Arminians. One extract from a reply by Thomas Olivers to a Rowland Hill pamphlet will be sufficient to show that neither side conducted itself with total decorum in this warfare:

Mean as you are, considered in yourself, all your
 ambition to be taken notice of shall not be
 disappointed. I'll throw the poor thing another
 sugar-plum, that in the vehicle I may
 administer some wholesome physic [30].

and this is followed by a piece of rhyming doggerel which compared his opponent with a toad.

Various attempts were made to end the open warfare. Before Richard Hill had entered in 1771, Berridge had written to him enjoining an abstinence from controversial writing and concentration on the war with the devil [31]. In his Finishing Stroke of 1773, Hill declared that the controversy was getting nowhere and that he resolved to dispute no more, but he published twice more before the end of that year. Berridge himself wrote The Christian World Unmasked; Pray Come and Peep in 1773, but before Fletcher replied Berridge had communicated with him announcing his determination to write no more and asking Fletcher to cease fighting with Toplady because he believed that the disputes were "setting the Christian

world on fire, and the carnal world in laughter" [32]. The death of Toplady in 1778 marked the end of the controversy. A handful of pamphlets appeared after this time but without Toplady's vitriolic editorship of the Gospel Magazine the venom was lacking and the arguments cooled down.

In 1878 Abbey and Overton [33] suggested that the acrimony of the controversy was not through a lack of Christian spirit but due to the intensity of belief of the two parties in their separate doctrines. Certainly both sides saw each other's beliefs on the issue of predestination against free grace as the very embodiment of the devil and this prompted them to use such foul language in their publications. As soon as the publications had ceased all the disputants regretted what had happened. In later years Rowland Hill said that "A softer style and spirit would have better become me" [34]. The quarrel was regretted by all and had done nothing to answer the questions it had raised; the participants had accomplished nothing. When asked if he had possessed certain works in the debate Berridge replied:

I have them on my shelves in my library, where
they are very quiet; if I take them down, and look
into them, they will begin to quarrel and
disagree [35].

The important work for all these men had been partly neglected for almost a decade and this was regretted by all. The pamphlets had harmed this work by presenting the outside world with a paradox. These men claimed to preach and believe in various evangelical Christian doctrines, yet in their lives they were prepared to bombard each other with scurrilous abuse. This had three effects; first it, made their preaching look ridiculous, second, neither side was proven to be right in its doctrines through its action, and third, the outside world could only but see them as foul-tempered

religious bigots. A second outcome of the controversy was a clear demonstration of the divisions within the movement. In the last chapter it was shown that all those who held evangelical beliefs were united in one work. The Calvinistic Controversy showed that this was not the whole truth. From the start there were philosophical divisions within the Revival. These were aired on several occasions and most fully discussed in the acrimonious disputes of the 1770's. The differences themselves were not removed but after the 1770's they ceased to be an issue. The Methodist followers of Wesley remained entrenched in Arminianism, though they moved away from any suggestion of holding salvation by works. The Calvinistic Methodists and Evangelicals retained their theology but withdrew from any antinomian tendencies. In the wake of the controversy there was a close co-operation between men of diverse doctrinal viewpoints. The division which was to arise between the evangelicals and the Anglican Evangelicals was not caused by philosophical or theological differences but concern over the social order and will be discussed in the next chapter.

In relation to this chapter one of the two most important publications of the Calvinistic Controversy was Rowland Hill's Imposture Detected... which was an attack on the sermon Wesley had preached at the laying of the foundation stone of the City Road Chapel in 1777. In this Wesley had claimed to precede Whitefield in preaching out of doors, and had then proceeded to give a history of the revival of religion as it had occurred in his eyes. This contained the following passage:

But a good man who met with us when we were
at Oxford, while he was absent from us,
conversed much with Dissenters, and contracted
strong prejudices against the Church; I mean,

Mr Whitefield: And not long after he totally separated from us. In some years, William Cudworth and several others separated from him, and turned Independents; as did Mr Maxfield and a few more; after being separated from us. Lastly, a school was set up near Trevecka, in Wales; and almost all who were educated there, (except those that were ordained, and some of them too) as they disclaimed all connexion with the Methodists, so they disclaimed the Church also: Nay, they spoke of it upon all occasions with the exquisite bitterness and contempt [36].

What offended Hill most and led to his extreme invective was that this was all the reference that Wesley made to Whitefield, and the Countess of Huntingdon was completely ignored. By implication Wesley had banished the followers of Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon from the movement which had begun in England around 1738 and installed his followers as the only inheritors of that legacy. The Calvinistic Methodists felt abandoned and did not see the history of the Evangelical Revival in the same way. Hill felt indebted to Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon and through these two saw himself linked to the opening work of 1738. Wesley's sermon denied this link and Hill saw this as a misrepresentation. He wrote of Wesley as a:

false accuser... violating the ashes of the dead... the late ever-memorable Mr Whitefield, scratched out of his grave, by the claws of a designing wolf [37].

According to John's misrepresentation of this elect lady [The Countess of Huntingdon], her seeming zeal and devotion for God and his cause must be all affectation and grimace [38].

Hill continued to claim that it was not Whitefield who had departed from the Church but Wesley who had set himself up as a Dissenter. He almost went so far as to argue that Wesley did not stand in succession to the events of the late 1730's. This pamphlet shows that the evangelicals not only disagreed in some doctrinal matters but were also starting to see their past in different lights, and illustrated perfectly the argument of this chapter; that the internal discussions of the evangelicals in the late 1760's and 1770's led to a change in their perception of the Evangelical Revival from that of the earliest evangelicals. In the previous chapter it was shown that the evangelicals held a static view of a group of men working with the same end; by 1780 this view had changed. The Evangelicals, Calvinistic Methodists and the Methodists were proclaiming gospels which differed on a few doctrinal matters and no longer saw each other as united in one movement. One group traced its roots to Wesley., the other to Whitefield. There was still friendship between the two sides on a personal level and an acknowledgement of the fact that they did not differ in opinion but only in expression [39], but the Revival had split into two halves which often retained a close relationship on a personal level but were by no means united as before. A change had occurred and this chapter has shown how such a transformation was seen and expressed in the writings of the evangelical Protestants.

Notes on Chapter Four

1. The Works of John Wesley (Baker Book House Edition) Vol VII p373
2. The Works of John Wesley (Baker Book House Edition) Vol VII pp365-6
3. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol 1 pp313-4. Dallimore – George Whitefield (1970) Vol II p552
5. Thirty Nine Articles Nos 9, 10, 17
6. Martin – John Newton. A Biography (1950) p176
7. Rev James Hervey (1714-58). Vicar of Weston Favell and Collingtree in Northamptonshire. His Theoron and Apasio was published in 1755. This was a devotional work which was a popular exposition of Calvinism. He also wrote Meditations among the Tombs (1745-47)
8. Rev William Cudworth (d. 1763) Had been a follower of Whitefield before becoming minister of an Independent congregation in Margaret Street, London. He was an antagonist of Wesley, who will appear again later.
9. Apart from the works already noted, the following appeared.
 For Wesley: Some strictures on a Few Places of the late Reverend Mr Hervey's Letters to the Reverend Mr John Wesley By A Clergyman – (1765); An Answer to Apasio Vindicated in Eleven Letters, said to be wrote by the late Rev Mr James Hervey – Walter Sellon (1765); An Earnest Appeal to the Public, in an Honest, Amicable, and Affectionate Reply to "The Preface of Aspasio Vindicated" – J. Kershaw (1765); Some Remarks on a Defence of the Preface to the Edinburgh Edition of Aspasio Vindicated – J. Wesley (1765).
 For Hervey: A Friendly Reproof to a Country Clergyman; for his Answer to the late Rev Mr Hervey's Letters in Vindication of his Theron and Aspasio – Anon (1765); Mr Wesley's Principles Detected; or A Defence of the Preface to

the Edinburgh Edition of Aspasio Vindicated, in an Answer to Mr Kershaw's Earnest Appeal – Dr Erskine (1765)

10. Walter Sellon (1715–92). Taught Classics at Kingswood 1748–50 when he became curate of Smisby and Breedon, Leics. From 1770 to his death he was Vicar of Ledsham, Yorks.

11. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol I p531

12. The Foundry was Wesley's centre at Moorfields, The Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road was Whitefield's

13. In this thesis the word Evangelical, in the upper case, has been used to denote those who belonged to the Evangelical party within the Church of England. In the lower case, evangelical, denotes those outside that party who held evangelical views, namely Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists and some Dissenters. When both shades are described terms such as evangelical Protestants or those of evangelical beliefs have generally been used. Wesley was trying to unite all men of evangelical belief in one group to work together and the term used here denotes both evangelicals and Evangelicals. Until the very end of the eighteenth century it is often very difficult to ascribe a particular man to a particular party, for example Grimshaw and Berridge, and this leads to some difficulties in the totally exact use of these terms.

14. The Letters of John Wesley Vol IV p237

15. The Letters of John Wesley Vol IV p238

16. Baker – John Wesley and the Church of England (1970) p196

17. Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–78). Ordained 1764. From 1768 was vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon. Originally under Wesley's influence, he was converted to extreme Calvinist opinions in 1758.

18. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol III p56

19. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol III p73
20. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol III p82
21. Hon and Rev Walter Shirley, Vicar of Loughrea, cousin to the Countess of Huntingdon
22. The Letters of John Wesley Vol V p274–5
23. The Circular letter had been produced by Shirley and the Countess of Huntingdon to show their objection to the minutes. John William Fletcher (1729–85) was Vicar of Madeley, Shropshire, and a close friend of Wesley.
24. Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol III p102
25. See Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century Vol II p156
26. Sangster – The Life of Rev Rowland Hill (1744–1833) and his Position in the Evangelical Revival – p80–81 (hereafter Sangster) Unpublished Oxford DPhil 1964
27. Green p112–135. There is no doubt that the list is incomplete. One of the items omitted by Green is A necessary Alarm and most earnest Caveto against Tabernacle Principles and Tabernacle Connections: containing the substance of an extraordinary Harangue and Exhortation, delivered at Penzance, in August 1774; on an extraordinary occasion By J.W., Master of very extraordinary Arts.
28. Sangster p88
29. Sangster p88
30. Sangster p93
31. 20/10/1771 Letter from Berridge to Hill – Sangster p83. John Berridge (1716–93) was the Vicar of Everton, Beds.
32. Smyth – Simeon and Church Order (1940) p186
33. Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century

Vol II pp157-8

34. Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century

Vol II p157

35. Smyth – Simeon and Church Order p193

36. The Works of John Wesley (Baker Book House Edition) Vol VII p429

37. Rowland Hill – Imposture Detected p4

38. Rowland Hill – Imposture Detected p19

39. Eg Meeting of Wesley and Simeon 1784.

Chapter Five

1778-1830 : The Later Period

Before surveying the views of the Evangelical Revival in the dying years of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century it is necessary briefly to examine the background of this period. In the middle of the eighteenth century Methodism was a small scale phenomenon assisted by a few sympathetic clergymen in the Church of England. By the end of the century, however, the situation had changed. At the time of Wesley's death in 1791 the Methodist Conference listed 72, 476 people as members of the Connexion. In 1784 Wesley had made a deed of declaration which legally established the continuation of Methodism as a corporate body in a 'Yearly Conference of the People called Methodists' by nominating one hundred persons whom he declared to be its members, and he laid down the method by which their successors should be appointed. In the same year he had 'ordained' several men for work in America, in 1785 three preachers for Scotland, and, by 1788, had ordained another nine for Scotland, ten for overseas and, for the first time one for England. The exact meaning to him of these 'ordinations' is not certain but they marked a further movement away from the fold of the Established Church.

It has been shown earlier that Wesley denied that he dissented from the Established Church; rather, he claimed to have no need of the protection of the Toleration Act [1]. But on 11 January 1758, Jacob Rowell of Barnard Castle took out the first Methodist preaching licence, and from this date onwards the registration of Methodist preaching houses became increasingly common. In 1760 a group of Methodists in Kent had been

charged for not being registered under the Toleration Act; Wesley appealed to the Court of the King's Bench and won the case. For John Wesley, this showed that the Methodists still stood within the Established Church. He wrote to his brother Charles:

it is of more consequence than our people seem to apprehend, if we do not exert ourselves it may drive us back to that bad dilemma — leave preaching or leave the church. We have reason to thank God it is not come to this yet. Perhaps it never may [2].

Despite the result of this trial Wesley was forced to produce, in 1763, a model deed for the registration of meeting houses for Methodist use. Wesley did not wish to set himself and his followers apart from the Established Church and added the following to his model deed:

Do not licence yourself till you are constrained:
and then not as a dissenter, but a Methodist
preacher. It is time enough when you are
prosecuted to take the oaths. Thereby you are
licensed [3].

A full survey of the relations between Methodism and the Established Church is beyond the scope of this short introduction but it should be remembered that by the death of Wesley in 1791 the Methodists were sizeable in number and that modern scholarship has pointed to various incidents as showing that Methodism had departed from the fold of the Established Church.

Such a distinction, however, was not apparent to most of the writers covered in this chapter. Walsh, in his 1965 essay on "Methodism at the End

of the Eighteenth Century", stated that in:

1791 to the non-evangelical world the term
'Methodist' was still a blanket title which
covered many varieties of 'Enthusiasm' [4].

William Kingsbury [5], writing in 1798, argued that the term 'methodistical',
was:

a convenient word, often used as a vehicle of
contempt; though perhaps a term as vague and
uncertain in its signification as any in our
language [6].

Some writers were, however, aware of distinctions within the Evangelical
Revival and these will be discussed later.

The Methodist Connexion was not the only part of the Evangelical
Revival which advanced between the middle and latter parts of the
eighteenth century. The Evangelical party within the Established Church
had also grown from a small number of clergymen working alongside
Wesley and Whitefield to a party within their own church. Lecky argued
that:

by the close of the century the Evangelical party
were incontestably the most numerous and most
active party in the English Church [7].

W.E. Gladstone did not agree with this assessment; rather, for him the
Evangelical Movement never became dominant in England and its greatest
influence and numbers did not occur until the second quarter of the
nineteenth century. Until 1820 the Evangelicals were in a small minority
among the clergy and after their period of most rapid increase they still only
numbered 1500, or one eighth of the total clergy, in 1830. But despite the lack

of numbers in the Evangelical party their zeal and activity gave them an influence far beyond their numbers [8].

Ford K. Brown stated that, in 1785, the Evangelical party was probably less than one hundred strong and had little influence [9]; of these forty or fifty were clergymen. By 1792 he suggested that there were probably around sixty Evangelical clergymen supported by a few middle and upper class laymen [10]. By 1800 the number of Evangelical clergy had continued to grow and these had been joined by two or three hundred "substantial and influential" laymen [11]. Much of his work is occupied by the list of various Evangelical societies which show that the Evangelical party grew immensely, especially in lay spheres, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Whichever of these interpretations of the strength of the Evangelical party is followed it is apparent that the period with which this chapter is concerned saw an extensive growth in the Evangelical section of the Established Church. The same outburst of growth can also be seen in the Congregational, Particular Baptist and General Baptist New Connexion membership totals; in 1790 they had 45,843 members, in 1800 82,403 members and by 1838 226,947 [12].

After Wesley's death the Methodist Connexion was forced to reassess its situation, and this led indirectly to various secessions; for instance — New Connexion Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians. In spite of this disruption total Methodist membership increased greatly during the period at present under review.

It should constantly be borne in mind that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw an enormous increase in the strength and influence of evangelical beliefs and the effect of this on the perception of the Evangelical Revival will be seen later.

The latter half of the eighteenth century was a period of great change in England, and at a hitherto unknown speed. Rapid developments in industry led to new suburbs, villages becoming towns, communities of miners springing up — all of which stretched the machinery of policing, administration and the Established Church. Law and order was hard to maintain and there was frequent unrest; for instance, the Spitalfields weavers forays and the Gordon Riots. Similar developments occurred in agriculture; enclosure, for example, caused unrest and great poverty for the rural poor which led to greater stress on the already over burdened system of the Poor Law.

In 1789, the French Revolution occurred. The lower orders rose up in rebellion and overturned the Ancien Regime of Church and Monarchy. The initial reaction in England was mixed, with at least one bishop — Richard Watson of Llandaff — initially welcoming the revolution in anticipation of the

glorious prospect of the prevalence of general

freedom and general happiness in Europe [13].

By 1793 any support had, however, turned to revulsion as the Terror took over in France and Louis XVI was beheaded. The fall of Robespierre and the Jacobin Republic in 1794 did not lead to increased feelings of security as it was followed by the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. From early in the 1790's into the following century many felt themselves to be on the edge of the precipice into which France had already fallen. The Christian world was involved in a fateful struggle, and England was the last outpost to resist. Samuel Horsley, Bishop of Rochester, mobilised the militia to counter what he saw as a grand conspiracy directed against Christian civilization and unfolding in accordance with apocalyptic and millenarian prophecies. Horsley saw the

situation in France in the following terms:

Her riches, sacred and profane given up to the
pillage of sacrilege and rapine! Atheists
directing her councils! Desperados conducting
her armies! Wars of unjust and chimerical
ambition consuming her youth! Her granaries
exhausted! Her fields uncultivated! Famine
threatening her multitudes! Her streets
swarming with assassins filled with violence
and deluged with blood [14].

Even the moderate William Van Mildert, who was later Bishop of Durham, in reviewing the Revolutionary period in 1821 saw it as a time of great danger to society:

It can scarcely have escaped the observation of
any of us that for several years past — even from
the commencement of that revolution in a
neighbouring country which in its desolating
progress uprooted every principle, every
sentiment of religion, of loyalty and of social
order — an extensive and formidable party in
this country has been either openly or covertly
endeavouring to effect among us a similar
catastrophe [15].

The charges advanced against the evangelicals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries must be seen against the background of fear for the state of the nation which the French Revolution and its consequences precipitated.

In 1792 the Rev Dr Tatham, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, preached a sermon in that city which attacked the Dissenters. He received replies from James Hinton, the evangelical Nonconformist who had become the minister of New Road Chapel, Oxford in 1788, and from Joseph Benson who had been educated at St Edmund Hall and had taught at Trevecca. Tatham portrayed the evangelical Dissenters as highly uneducated and as belonging to the lowest orders. He saw the people being:

led away with the wildest infatuation, and with
itching ears, by ignorant and itinerant
preachers of every denomination; by Methodists
and Enthusiasts, by Anabaptists and Dissenters,
of whose learning and abilities they have not the
smallest proof; men who are self-taught,
without power, and self-ordained, without the
appearance of learning; men out of the meanest
professions, and lowest occupations of life;
whom if they had a fair opportunity of trying,
they would find more ignorant and unqualified
than themselves – Blind leaders of the blind
[16].

Benson pointed out that social standing was not important, as Christ had been a carpenter who had been followed by twelve fishermen. From his knowledge of both Oxford and the Dissenting academies he was able to argue that the Dissenting ministers were often less ignorant than those of the Established Church [17]. Hinton said that the Dissenters were aware of the importance of an educated minority and always promoted the “education of pious and intelligent men for sacred service”, so that there was no

justification in presenting the Dissenting community as any less learned than other communities [18].

Before continuing this chapter it is necessary to examine the controversy from which many of the examples will be drawn. The Salisbury Village Preaching Controversy of 1798–9 was a crisis in the relationship between Establishment and Dissent in the diocese of Salisbury [19]. The controversy was opened by William Mogg Bowen in his Appeal to the People, on the Alleged Causes of the Dissenter's Separation from the Established Church. This pamphlet warns against various Dissenting itinerant evangelists who were ignoring parish boundaries. The work of these evangelists was further warned against by Bishop Douglas of Salisbury in his Charge of 1798. The Bishop himself took no further part in controversy and there is no copy of his Charge extant but there were thirteen other pamphlets produced by seven authors, representing four different ecclesiastical positions.

William Mogg Bowen (1767–1857) sought preferment in the Church of England through the well-tried and proven method of pamphleteering. John Malham (1747–1821) also had a desire for a patron at this time, although he had already made a name for himself by writing about Mathematics and navigation. These two men represented the High Church position and sought to check the spread of Orthodox Dissent by refuting the Nonconformist reasons for separation, showing that the growth of such Dissent jeopardised the future security of both Church and State, and that village preaching was merely a cloak for the promotion of this subversion.

William Lisle Bowles (1762–1850) suffered from a broken engagement in the 1780's and this led him to write some sonnets in Scotland and on the Rhine. Fourteen of these were published in 1789 and received some success,

going to a ninth edition by 1805. Coleridge claimed that these sonnets did his "heart more good than all the other books he ever read excepting the bible" [20]. The promise of these early sonnets was not fulfilled, however, and Bowles remained in a low clerical position. Bowles, the best known of the pamphleteers, defended Orthodox Dissent to a point and denied that their motives were political. He opposed Rational Dissent and Methodist ranters and, in doing so, upheld the Middle Church position.

The Rational Dissenters were represented by Henry Wansey (1751–1827). He was a Salisbury clothier who had achieved notoriety by introducing the spinning jenny to the area. One more pamphlet was written in favour of Rational Dissent by Joseph Fisher of Ringwood, Attorney at Law, and others of whom nothing else is known. The Rational Dissenters defended the right to preach in villages but were more interested in the wider relationship between Nonconformity and the Establishment.

Samuel Clift, the Independent pastor of Chippenham, and William Kingsbury (1744–1818), the minister of Above Bar Independent congregation, Southampton, represented the position of Orthodox Dissent. They stressed the similarities between Orthodox Dissenters and the Established Church and refuted any charge of promoting schism or in any way trying to subvert order. They argued that all they wanted was liberty to preach the Gospel.

This gives a brief background to the pamphlets which constituted the Salisbury Village Preaching Controversy of 1798–9, and form the basis of much of this chapter [21]. Ostensibly the controversy concerned the evangelistic itinerant village preaching of various Dissenting denominations in the area around Salisbury, but really it considered wider issues.

Again the Dissenting preachers were portrayed as ignorant men of the lowest orders:

men of the most ignorant and uneducated minds, who are capable of expressing only a few broken and incoherent sentences, on the subjects of grace, faith, repentance, salvation, ...

I have been well informed, that from the city of Salisbury alone, there issues forth, on the sabbath, no less a number, than between fifty and sixty dissenting preachers; some perhaps licenced; many not licenced; self-instructed; self ordained; employed, on common days, in the various capacities of Tailors, Cabinet makers, Shoemakers, Cobblers, Bakers, Blacksmiths, &c. What instruction can such men furnish? Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch [22]?

Clift argued in reply that Dissenting ministers were educated in academies. With the increase in the numbers of settlements and hearers it had become impossible to supply enough fully educated preachers, but Clift and Kingsbury argued that it was better to send pious men armed with printed sermons to read than to leave the Gospel unpreached [23].

John Malham examined Burder's Village Sermons which would have been one of the works used by these less educated itinerants and argued that these sermons were not full of sober piety and substantial doctrine in support of the Gospel, as the Dissenters would have claimed, but were, rather enthusiastic effusions [24]. The charge of enthusiasm which had been used in such a widespread manner in the early eighteenth century was much less common by the end of that century but by no means extinct. It has

already been shown that Dr Tatham of Oxford also referred to enthusiasts in his sermon [25].

The evangelicals argued that their preaching was needed because the ministers of the Established Church were not discharging their duty correctly [26]. That this charge had some foundation could not be denied. Horsley chided his own clergy for being negligent, pluralistic and non-resident, and Benson suggested that the perceived threat of the Dissenters could be removed if the ministers of the Established Church showed as much concern for their work as the Dissenters did. He called on the clergy to preach the pure doctrine of the Church of England [27].

In all of the publications under review there was only one suggestion of heresy on the part of evangelicals, when Clift perceived that the Bishop of Salisbury believed that some of the preachers were tainted with Arianism. This he denied, pointing out that the depreciation of the Divinity of Christ led to a diminution rather than a growth in evangelical zeal [28]. Benson, in his A Farther Defence of the Methodists, in Letters, Addressed to the Rev W. Russel, Curate of Pershore. In Answer to his Hints to the Methodists and Dissenters, replied to the question of why Methodist ministers saw themselves as competent to preach and yet did not administer the sacraments themselves [29]. He stated that the Methodists did not dissent from the Established Church, except in corrupt novelties of doctrine, and wished to remain in communion with that Church. They only licenced their preaching houses under the Toleration Act because for reasons of security it was expedient to do so. Benson denied that Methodist preachers were incompetent to baptise and celebrate the Lord's Supper but claimed that the Methodists relied on the clergy of the Church of England for these sacraments to avoid widening the gap between them unnecessarily [30].

The point at issue in Russel's charge previously dealt with is not only the superficial one over the question of administration of the sacraments but a far more fundamental one of schism. Clift denied that the Dissenters wished to "form a separation from the national establishment" [31]. This charge of subverting the Church was closely allied to the prevalent charge of subverting the State and the Monarchy. In the wake of the French Revolution such charges were both prevalent and pervasive. Bowen argued that the motive of the evangelical Dissenters in seeking to convert great numbers of the unlearned and unpropertied poor was not a religious but a political one [32]. Bowen pointed to a quotation to show that, in previous years, the Dissenting denominations had been responsible for the death of Charles I [33]. In two of the pamphlets of the controversy Bowles linked Henry Wansey with Napper Tandy, an Irishman who had tried to lead a Protestant Rebellion in Ireland in 1798 [34]. His fellow clergyman Bowen argued that, in the light of previous Dissenting actions, it could only be believed that the Dissenters' present intentions were disloyal and that the ignorant should be warned of this.

Their sole object in view, I cannot prevail on myself to believe, is that of serving Christ. The number they have already converted and the indefatigable exertions they are still making to increase this number, are sufficient, in my opinion, to justify serious and earnest endeavors, on the part of the established clergy, and of every sound patriot, to undeceive the deluded multitude, on religious doctrines, and to strip from their political designs the hypocritical veil,

with which it has ever been their adopted practice to conceal them. We cannot, at this moment, be too circumspect, too vigilant, or too suspicious of all their movements, both religious and political. Every man, at all conversant with English history, must know, what political changes the dissenters have effected in former times; must know the distress, the calamities, and misery, inflicted, at different periods, upon the inhabitants of this country, by their restless and disloyal exertions. Were I called upon to cite particular instances of such calamities, such changes, and effective marks of their disloyalty, I would refer my readers to the reign of Charles the First as a period, the most apposite at the present moment [35].

In this extract the call to the clergy to greater exertions was not for a religious but a political motive. In the passage immediately preceding this one it was suggested that the preachers received a salary from a body which had been designed along lines unfavourable to the government of England. The evangelical preachers were portrayed as paid agents of subversion.

Samuel Horsley argued that the great increase in the number of conventicles registered by Dissenters was proof of their illicit motives. He accepted that there was a large number of pious and faithful men among their ranks, but argued that these men were unwittingly being used by others whose intentions were far from religious. From the fact that most of these conventicles had been registered since the passing of the Acts commonly

known as the Sedition and Treason Acts [36] he concluded, that sedition and atheism were their true intentions. Horsley argued that Methodism was being made a tool of Jacobinism [37].

The charges that the evangelical preachers were seeking to promote revolution and rebellion in England were widespread and sweeping accusations. Rev John Malham claimed to have knowledge of one hundred sermons which displayed disloyalty and disaffection to the government on the part of the Dissenters [38]. The latter, however, vigorously denied that they sought to promote such rebellion. Kingsbury argued that the meetings of the evangelical preachers were held in the open and were accessible to any, and pointed out the fact that despite the presence at various meetings of clergymen and magistrates, who would have noticed anything treasonable, none of the preachers had been accused under specific instances and not groundless assertion, of spreading rebellious principles [39].

Kingsbury also denied that the Dissenters had a history of discontent with the government; on the contrary, he stated that Dissenting ministers had presented a petition to the general and army on 18 January 1648 to try to prevent the death of Charles I [40]. He also suggested that the present position of Dissent was more important than any previous situation and that the Dissenters were now happily allied with the Established Church in essentials. In illustration of this point Kingsbury cited Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry the Biblical commentator, ejected in 1662 he had always prefaced his preaching with a prayer for the parish minister and his work [41], Benson and Hinton also argued the loyalty of the Methodists and Dissenters to the King and Constitution [42]. Indeed, throughout the Revolutionary period the Methodist Conference declared its loyalty. The Leeds Conference of 1793 expressed its "unfeigned loyalty to the King, and

sincere attachment to the Constitution" and the 1798 Conference Address announced that the Methodists were "not likely to meddle with those given to change" [43].

So far the attacks on Methodism and the Dissenters have been considered. It has already been noted that, during the Revolutionary period, the Evangelicals within the Church of England were a small party. They were not, however, unnoticed. The reason they were not attacked as being supporters of revolution and the overthrowers of the Constitution was that they were at the forefront of attempts to stifle all possibilities of disorder. James Bean, Vicar of Olney, looking back at earlier years in his anonymous publication of 1808 Zeal without Innovation, declared that the Evangelicals:

have often availed themselves of their situation
as ministers to stem the tide of sedition. It
deserves notice, that in the most threatening
periods of Revolutionary mania, these men spoke
out very decidedly from the pulpit, in defence of
our unenviable constitution. In some places,
their zeal was such, as to make many conclude,
that in the event of an insurrection, they would
be among the first to be sacrificed [44].

William Wilberforce, for example, approved of the sentence passed on Palmer for sedition in 1793, approved of the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1794, and other years, which made repeated arrests and the use of force easier, was consulted by Pitt over the Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings Acts of 1795, and was a guiding force behind the Combination Laws of 1799-1800 which worked against the working classes joining in associations.

William Cobbett (1763–1835) claimed that the Evangelical representatives in Parliament, who were collectively known as the Saints, were the main props of Pitt's system in the 1790's which, through a succession of repressive acts, sought to prevent revolution in England. The Evangelicals wished to distance themselves from the evangelical Methodists and Dissenters. In 1760 John Wesley had invited John Newton to join the ranks of Methodists itinerants. Newton had replied:

Though I love the Methodists, and vindicate them
from unjust aspersions upon all occasions, and
suffer the reproach of the world for being one
myself, yet it seems not practicable for me to join
them further than I do [45].

In 1793 he declared that:

All the Dissenters, even the orthodox not
excepted, are republicans and enemies to the
government [46]

Likewise, Charles Simeon, who had met cordially with Wesley in 1784, warned against false prophets in a sermon of 1796. These false prophets were those whose doctrines:

had manifest tendency to make people factious,
or disturbers of the public peace [47]

In Hull a monthly meeting had developed between Evangelical clergymen, Methodists, and evangelical Dissenters. Suddenly in 1792 the Evangelical ministers dropped these meetings [48]. The Evangelicals within the Established Church distanced themselves from other evangelicals through their actions and words.

The Evangelical Anglicans were, however, in numerical terms, a

small group and as such did not appear in the only assessment of the width of the Evangelical Revival seen in the writings surveyed so far in this chapter. Rev S. Clift stated that the work had begun with the Methodists and, more specifically, the ministry of Wesley and Whitefield. He noticed that many Anglicans had been awakened by the preaching of those two men but that the coolness of the Established Church had led them to depart from this church to join the Dissenters. Clift appeared to be unaware of men of evangelical principles remaining within the fold of the Established Church [49].

The charges examined so far have revolved around the accusation that the rapidly expanding Methodists and Dissenting groups were seeking to bring about a complete overthrow of the religious and political constitutions of England in a similar manner to that which had occurred in France. Some of the charges advanced which appeared to be completely unrelated were merely used to illustrate the charge of promoting revolution. The suggestion that evangelical preachers were working for temporal and not spiritual gain was a cover for the premise that they were merely paid agents of subversion. The response of the evangelicals was to deny that they sought to promote rebellion but were rather working to promote the gospel and would have others do the same.

There was a change in the perception of the Evangelical Revival between 1805 and 1815. Charges that the evangelicals sought to promote revolution did not completely disappear, however; Richard Mant, who was later to become Bishop of Killaloe 1820–3 and Bishop of Down 1823–49, wrote in his 1808 Puritanism Revived; Or Methodism As Old As The Great Rebellion. In A Series Of Letters From A Curate To His Rector that the Methodists were similar to the Puritans of the previous century to whom:

we were indebted in former times for the murder
of our King, the overthrow of our monarchy, the
dissolution of our civil constitution, and the
abolition of our ecclesiastical establishment [50].

Furthermore, Neesham, the lay Master of an Academy at Dunholm, near Lincoln, suggested that the Protestant Dissenters were united in their opposition to the constitution of the State and Church [51].

Such charges were, however, the exception to the rule. Sydney Smith, in his 1808 review of Robert Ingram's Causes of the Increase of Methodism and Dissension, castigated the writer for using the "exploded clamour of Jacobinism" against the Methodists. Smith was in no doubt that Methodists were, instead, very good and loyal subjects [52]. Another writer of 1815 announced that:

the loyalty and patriotism of the Methodists is
now well-known, both to the government itself
and to the nation in general [53].

and decided that the contribution of the Methodists:

in preventing the spread of French principles
both political and religious, is only fully known to
God [54].

The first two decades of the nineteenth century saw a great growth in the Evangelical party and a change in their relationships with other evangelicals. In 1811 Viscount Sidmouth introduced a Bill to the House of Lords which required that all Dissenting preachers should be licensed and that all unlicensed preachers should be prevented from preaching. The Bill made the granting of a licence conditional on any application form being countersigned by six reputable householders of the same religious

persuasion as the applicant. It was intended to inhibit men who were not specifically attached to any congregation, and aimed to stop irregular and unordained men preaching. The Bill had its first reading on May 9, and was opposed by Lord Holland and Lord Stanhope. Outside Parliament it was opposed by several groups including The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty and The Protestant Dissenting Deputies. On May 14 the Methodist Committee of Privileges met and passed a series of resolutions protesting against the Bill. They also asked Sidmouth to withdraw his Bill, but this request was refused. Meetings were then held throughout the country, and within a few days thirty thousand Methodists had signed petitions objecting to the Bill and these were joined by petitions from the other objectors.

The second reading of the Bill was at the earliest possible moment on 21 May. By this date the nationwide opposition was such that it was suggested to Sidmouth that the measure should be dropped. Lord Holland [55] argued that by forcing preachers to have six householders to guarantee them the bill was an infringement of every individual's right to interpret the Scriptures as they wished, and Stanhope and Grey also spoke against the Bill. Only Sidmouth spoke for it, and so the Bill was withdrawn without a division.

Soon after the failure of this Bill many magistrates, took a new interpretation of the Toleration Act, refusing to issue licenses to men who could not prove that they were ministers of separate congregations. This interpretation was overturned by a ruling from the Court of the King's Bench but with a clear invitation to the lower courts to continue the harassment, and so the Protestant Society and the Methodist Committee of Privileges were again forced to act to safeguard the welfare of their preachers. They decided

to apply to Parliament for relief from these disabilities and received support from the Evangelical Prime Minister Spencer Perceval. Perceval was assassinated on May 11, 1812 in the lobby of the House of Commons but his successor, Lord Liverpool, helped to move a Toleration Act through Parliament, which received Royal Assent on 29 July 1812. This Act repealed the Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act, which had previously limited Dissenters and compelled magistrates to licence any who wished it. On 31 July 1812 the Methodist Committee of Privileges sent a letter to the Circuit Superintendents in which they thanked those who had helped in the passing of this new Toleration Act. Among those listed were Wilberforce and the other Evangelical Members of Parliament.

The failure of Sidmouth's Bill, the passing of an Act of Toleration, and Joseph Butterworth's gaining of the seat of Coventry in Parliament in 1812 [56], were all indications of the growing size and influence of evangelical Protestantism. The support of the 'Saints' was indicative of the improving relations between the Evangelicals and others holding evangelical beliefs. This changing relationship was manifested in the British and Foreign Bible Society. This was the largest of the Bible societies, and was founded in London in 1804 along strictly interdenominational lines. Its committee had thirty-six laymen who comprised six foreign members, fifteen Anglicans, and fifteen members of other denominations. A similar approach was manifest in the constitutions and membership of many of the societies of this period [57].

Though evangelical beliefs were becoming more widespread and accepted as the nineteenth century proceeded they were not without their critics. These were not as numerous as they had been in previous years but did, nevertheless, still exist. The basic lines of criticism were that the

evangelicals believed themselves to be specially favoured by God and that they followed a very narrow and blinkered form of Christianity. Hett argued that the Evangelical preachers within the Established Church saw themselves as superior to all other preachers [58]. Mant wrote that the Methodists laid "claim to special favour of heaven" [59], and Sydney Smith, in the Edinburgh Review of 1808, wrote that:

The Methodists consider themselves as constituting a chosen and separate people, living in a land of atheists and voluntaries. The expressions by which they designate their own sects, are the dear people — the elect — the people of God. The rest of mankind are carnal people — the people of this world, &c. &c. The children of Israel were not more separated, through the favour of God, from the Egyptians, than the Methodists are, in their own estimation, from the rest of mankind [60].

As proof of the Methodists claiming the favouring of God, Smith produced extracts from the Evangelical Magazine and the Methodist Magazine. These extracts showed that all men of evangelical beliefs saw the interference of providence with special and extraordinary judgements on every trifling occasion of life. One example will suffice:

Interference respecting swearing, — a Bee the Instrument.

A young man is stung by a bee, upon which he buffets the bees with his hat, uttering at the same time the most dreadful oaths and imprecations. In the midst of his fury, one of

these little combatants stung him upon the tip of that unruly member (his tongue), which was then employed in blaspheming his Maker. Thus can the Lord engage one of the meanest of his creatures in reproving the bold transgressor that dares to take his name in vain [61].

The evangelical Protestants were accused of narrowness in several spheres; for instance, Hett, in reference to Evangelical preachers, claimed that they preached a narrow gospel. They limited their preaching to the doctrines of the utter depravity of the human heart, regeneration, conversion and justification by faith alone, to the exclusion of other areas of the Christian faith [62]. The writer was keen to press the cause of the preaching of Christian morality which he claimed was disparaged or ignored by the Evangelical preachers. In support of this claim he cited the experience of a friend who, through age and infirmity, had been unable to continue to fulfill the duties of his parish charge. The parish contained a man who had led a dissolute life and who had been imprisoned for his 'iniquitous practices'. Throughout his ministry Hett's friend had preached on the necessity of good works in conjunction with true faith and the obligation of the faithful to keep God's commandments, but in his infirmity the ageing minister had been forced to engage an Evangelical preacher as a curate, though he continued to attend the church on the Sabbath. After three months Hett's friend was approached by the reprobate who commented that his evil deeds were not brought to mind by the new preacher; indeed, works were not mentioned. Hett argued that, though this might be Gospel preaching, he himself did not see it as preaching the Gospel [63]. Hett believed that morality was important as it showed that Christianity was something to practise as well to believe.

He did not deny the importance of the "knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified" [64], but stressed the importance of:

the most scrupulous practice of Christian
morality, as taught and exemplified by our
blessed Lord, by his holy Apostles, and by the
primitive Christians [65].

which the Evangelicals ignored, and the preaching of which they deplored. The Evangelicals stood accused of preaching a narrow gospel. Sydney Smith also commented on the gospel of the evangelical Protestants. He accepted that they subscribed to all the articles of the Church of England, but noted that they stressed some of these articles in preference to others in their preaching. The Evangelical preference for preaching doctrine in place of works is also recognised [66].

The accusations of narrowness were not, however, confined to their preaching and doctrine. Smith accused the Methodists of a narrow lifestyle:

The methodists hate pleasures and
amusements; no theatre, no cards, no dancing,
no punchinello, no dancing dogs, no blind
fiddlers; — all the amusements of the rich and of
the poor must disappear, wherever these gloomy
people get a footing. It is not the abuse of
pleasure they attack, but the interspersion of
pleasure, however much guarded by good sense
and moderation; ... it is not only dissipated to
run about to all the parties in London and
Edinburgh, — but dancing is not fit for a being
who is preparing himself for Eternity Ennui,

wretchedness, melancholy, groans and sighs,
 are the offerings which these unhappy men
 make to a Deity who has covered the earth with
 gay colours, and scented it with rich perfumes;
 ... and scattered over his creation a thousand
 superfluous joys, which are totally unnecessary
 to the mere support of life [67].

Smith saw this melancholy tendency of Methodism extending to the popular evangelical writings. In 1809 Hannah More [68] published Coelebs in Search of a Wife: comprehending observations on Domestic Habits and Manners, Religion and Morals. Smith, in reviewing the work, criticised it as being merely a "dramatic sermon" [69] in which no effort had been made to put the religious advice it contained into a palatable form. The basic thrust of Smith's criticism was that the outlook of what was supposed to be a novel had been reduced so that it was only a narrow religious tract which sought to promote:

the enforcement of religious principle, and the
 condemnation of a life lavished in dissipation
 and fashionable amusement [70].

Smith saw in More's work a complete opposition to any amusements at all, and also argued that the evangelical Protestants were out of touch with those with whom they were seeking to influence. They were:

perpetually calling upon their votaries for
 religious thoughts and religious conversation in
 everything; inviting them to ride, walk, row,
 wrestle, and dine out religiously; — forgetting
 that the being to whom this impossible purity is

recommended, is a being compelled to scramble
for his existence and support for ten hours out of
the sixteen he is awake [71].

Their outlook were seen as narrow by their critics because they concentrated on religious issues to the exclusion of all else. Amusements were seen as sinful because they excited passions which did not act in a religious direction [72]. Even the religion which they focused on was seen as narrow because it stressed various areas of the Christian faith to the exclusion of others.

Having examined the evaluation of the Evangelical Revival by its critics it is necessary to review their views on its extent. It has been shown that, during the Revolutionary period, the Evangelicals had not been linked to any practical extent with the Methodists and Dissenters in formal religious structures. However, this situation changed in the later period. The most clear statements of this can be seen in the writings of Richard Mant and Sidney Smith. Before quoting from the Evangelical Magazine and the Methodist Magazine Smith noted the size of their circulation (18–20,000 each per month) as an expression of the support for the sentiments expressed in these magazines, which were those of the Evangelical clergymen in the Church of England and the Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists. Despite appreciating the existence of various parties within the Evangelical Revival, Smith used the term 'Methodist' to designate all shades of evangelical belief [73].

Mant also saw differing shades of opinion within the Evangelical Revival. In assessing the strength of evangelical belief he referred to the editor of The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, who had informed him that the Wesleyan Methodists were outnumbered by three to one when compared with the Calvinistic Methodists. He numbered Methodists as around three

million, or one quarter of the total population. The size of this figure can be accounted for when it is realised that Mant's intention was to prove that the Methodists were a menace to society. Mant noticed six Wesleyan meeting-houses in London and sixteen Calvinistic Methodist meeting-houses, and in addition to this he noticed that there were at least twelve churches or chapels in the metropolis at which Evangelical clergymen officiated. He did, however show a greater understanding than Smith when he also included in his survey various Dissenting evangelicals. He wrote:

many small conventicles are opened in various parts, where, though the preachers affect to be Independents, they are in truth Methodists. Many also of the old Dissenting places of worship have sunk into Methodism of this division; and have preachers who are not acknowledged by the regular board of Dissenters. In fact, with the exception of those, who are Baptists, Arians, or Socinians, the greater part of the Dissenting Congregations are not to be distinguished from the Methodists [74].

Mant was aware that evangelical beliefs were to be found in the Established Church, Dissent and Methodism. He was aware that the Calvinist and Arminian Methodism had split over their interpretations of the gospel, and also over the disputes within the Arminian Methodists, after the death of Wesley, over the future of the connexion, particularly in relation to the sacraments and forms of church government [75]. William Hett of Lincoln also showed some awareness of the Calvinistic Controversy [76]. Thus the

contemporaries of this period of the Evangelical Revival were aware of its breadth and influence within English religion and its internal differences.

To conclude it has been shown that the external perceptions of the Evangelical Revival changed between the 1790's and 1830. In the earlier period those who held evangelical views were accused of views which were contrary to the well being of the English Church and Constitution. It has been shown that some of the religious accusations levelled at the evangelicals were cloaks for political charges and were intended to be seen as such and not to stand on their own merit. They were linked under the term Methodist and the differing shades of evangelical belief were not realised. The small number of Evangelical clergymen were not linked with these Methodists and were not suspected of holding views inimical to the good of the country, but in this period the Evangelical sought to distance themselves from the Methodists.

In the first few years of the nineteenth century the political loyalty of the evangelicals was appreciated and the Evangelicals, whose loyalty could never be questioned, came into closer and more friendly contact with those men of similar belief who stood outside the Established Church. Those outside the evangelical world slowly accepted the loyalty of the Methodists which they had always claimed, but attacked the evangelical world for taking too narrow a view of religion and life. The outsiders also appreciated the various divisions within evangelical Protestantism on questions of religious polity and doctrine, even though these were often submerged in the pursuit of a common end.

While the outsider's perceptions of the Evangelical Revival changed in this period covered by this chapter the opinions of the evangelicals themselves on the aims of their own work did not change. In 1793 Joseph

Benson claimed that the Methodists were:

a company of inoffensive, peaceable, and
well-behaved people, assembled together to hear
that genuine Gospel.

In 1798 Clift claimed that the aim of the evangelical preachers was only "to spread the knowledge of Christianity" [78]. In 1808 Hannah More preached a 'vital religion' to make Christianity "the principle of all human actions, the great animating spirit of human conduct" [79]. At the foundation of the Cornwall Association of Congregational Churches in 1802 one of its stated aims was "to carry out the gospel into the dark and uncultivated villages and towns" [80] and in 1828 Charles Simeon wrote "I live in a region in which I would have you also move" [81]. These quotations illustrate that the evangelicals were only interested in the preaching of the gospel throughout the period covered by this chapter. In the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion any who moved from preaching the gospel to political activism were expelled. The evangelicals denied any political motivations for their actions and were not unduly insulted by the accusation that they concentrated too much on religion, which was advanced as the century progressed [82]. The Methodists, Dissenters, and the Evangelicals of the Established Church continued to see the Evangelical Revival in primarily religious terms.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. See page 20
2. Baker – John Wesley and the Church of England p199
3. Baker – John Wesley and the Church of England p199
4. Walsh – “Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century” p289 in A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol I Ed. Davies and Rupp (hereafter Davies and Rupp)
5. See page 66
6. Kingsbury – An Apology for Village Preachers; or, An Account of the Proceedings and Motives of Protestant Dissenters, And Serious Christians of other Denominations, in their attempts, to suppress Infidelity and Vice, and to Spread Vital Religion in Country Places; especially Where the Means of Pious Instruction, among the Poor are Rare; With some Animadversions on an Anonymous ‘Appeal to the People’; and Replies to Objections (1798) (hereafter An Apology) p35n
7. Lecky – England in the Eighteenth Century Vol II p627
8. Gladstone – Gleanings of Past Years (1879) Vol VII p209–11
9. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians (1961) p2
10. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians p9
11. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians p243
12. Gilbert – Religion and Society in Industrial England (1976) p37
13. Norman – Church and Society in England 1770–1970 (1976) p19
14. Soloway – Prelates and People: ecclesiastical and social thought in England 1783–1852 (1969) p32
15. Best – “The Mind and Times of William Van Mildert ” p369 in Journal of Theological Studies N.S. Vol 14 (1963)
16. See Benson – A Defence of the Methodists, In Five Letters, Addressed

to the Rev. Dr Tatham. Containing sundry remarks on a late discourse, preached by that Gentleman at four of the churches in Oxford and entitled 'A Sermon suitable to the Times' (1793) (hereafter A Defence) p38 and Hinton – A Vindication of the Dissenters in Oxford Addressed to the Inhabitants In Reply to Dr Tatham's Sermon lately published and having been preached in Oxford many sundays successively (1792) (hereafter A Vindication) p13–14

17. Benson – A Defence p38

18. Hinton – A Vindication pp12–13

19. I would like to thank Dr D.W. Lovegrove for giving me access to his notes on these and many of the other publications referred to in this chapter.

20. Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature (1922) Vol II p721

21. Further information is available in "A Local Crisis between Establishment and Nonconformity, The Salisbury Village Preaching Controversy, 1798–1799 " by D.J. Jeremy in Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine – 1966

22. Bowen – An Appeal to the People, on the Alleged Causes of the Dissenters' Separation from the Established Church: to which are subjoined A Few Cautionary Observations in respect to their Present Political Views (1798) (hereafter Appeal) p17

23. Clift – An Incidental Letter, addressed to The Lord of Sarum, August the 9th, 1798, the day of his visitation Held at Chippenham, Wilts. with some observations and reflections in favour of Village Preaching (1798) (hereafter Incidental Letter) p5 : Kingsbury – An Apology p14:

24. Malham – A Broom for the Conventicle; or The Arguments for Village Preaching Examined and Fairly Discussed; more particularly Obviating the Unfounded Assertions of Mr Kingsbury, of Southampton, and Mr Clift, of Chippenham, with Observations on The Various Replies to Mr

H.W.'s Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury. And the other Publications on this Subject (1798) (hereafter Broom) p 11

25. See page 65
26. Bowen – Appeal p17; Clift – Incidental Letter p12
27. Benson – A Defence pp50–51
28. Clift – Incidental Letter p15
29. This was a point of contention within the Methodist Connexion. As early as 1739 Wesley had administered the sacraments in private houses to those who refused to communicate in the parish church. In February 1760 three Methodist ministers in Norwich took it upon themselves to administer the sacraments. This led to a vote at the Conference of that year where it was decided that only ordained ministers could administer the sacraments. After Wesley's death in 1791 the issue again became pressing. The 1795 Plan of Pacification decided that the sacraments could be administered in Methodist chapels but only if the consent of Conference, a majority of the trustees, and of the stewards and leaders had been obtained. Not all immediately moved to administration of the sacraments in their own chapels, many still went to the Established Church. In the East Riding of Yorkshire it is supposed to have been ten years after Wesley's death before a single Methodist received a sacrament from one of his own preachers – See Walsh's article in Davies and Rupp Vol I p288
30. Benson – A Farther Defence of the Methodists. In Letters, Addressed to the Rev W. Russell, Curate of Pershore. In Answer to his Hints to the Methodists and Dissenters (1793) p95
31. Clift – Incidental Letter p4

32. Bowen – Appeal pp38–41
33. Bowen – Strictures, on A Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, on his late charge to the Clergy of his Diocese: By H.W. of Salisbury, A Dissenter: Author of 'A Tour to the United States of America' (1798) p26
34. Bowles – A Rowland for an Oliver, Addressed to Mr Wansey On his Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury (1798) p35: Bowles – A True Account of the Deplorable Malady of H—Y W—Y, A Wiltshire Clothier, Shewing How he mistook a Barber for a Clergyman in a red Coat; and a Lancet with which it was attempted to bleed him, for a Scymitar, Being An Epistle From his Cook—maid, Doll Dish—clout, to Mrs Bacon, the Tallow—chandler's Wife (1798) p8
35. Bowen – An Appeal pp33–4
36. The Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings Acts of 1795
37. Horsley – The Charge of Samuel, Lord Bishop of Rochester to the Clergy of his diocese (1800) pp146–8
38. Malham – Broom p21n
39. Kingsbury – Appeal p22
40. Kingsbury – Appeal p23
41. Kingsbury – Appeal p41
42. Hinton – A Vindication pp15, 17; Benson – A Defence p48f; Benson – A Farther Defence p78
43. See Armstrong – The Church of England, The Methodists and Society 1700–1850 (1973) p193. William Mawer, a Wesleyan Methodist stated in his The Examiner Examined, Or an Apology for The Methodists: Being an Answer to Mr Neesham's Examination; Together with some Further remarks on the Reverend Mr Hett's Letters to Lord A. B. C & C. (hereafter Examiner Examined) (1810) p25; that two Methodist preachers had answered

Paine's Age of Reason and Rights of Man while none of the 30,000 clergymen had.

44. Armstrong – The Church of England, The Methodists and Society 1700–1850 p152

45. Skevington Wood – “The Influence of Thomas Haweis on John Newton” from Journal of Ecclesiastical History (1953) p191

46. Davies and Rupp Vol I p303

47. Armstrong – The Church of England, The Methodists and Society 1700–1850 p152

48. Davies and Rupp Vol I p302

49. Clift – Incidental Letter p17

50. Mant – Puritanism Revived; Or Methodism As Old As The Great Rebellion. In A Series Of Letters From A Curate To His Rector (1808) (hereafter Puritanism Revived) pp1, 89

51. See Mawer – Examiner Examined p10

52. Smith – Essays by Sydney Smith (hereafter Essays) p91

53. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism p29

54. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism p29

55. Lord Holland was a member of the North-east London Auxiliary Bible Society – founded 16 March 1813 – but this was his only Evangelical association.

56. Joseph Butterworth was a founder member of the Methodist Committee of Privileges. He was a member of Wilberforce's 'Saints' and sat as M.P. for Coventry 1812–18 and Dover 1820–26.

57. Eg Religious Tract Society

58. Hett – Christian Morality; Or a hint to Gospel Preachers: A Sermon, delivered in the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, October 13, 1816 from

Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions (1818) (hereafter Christian Morality) Vol II p204 It is difficult to say, with any certainty, who this writer was. The Alumni Cantabrigensis (1947) warns its readers not to confuse William Hett; the son of Michael, Gentleman of Potter Hanworth, Lincs, who obtained both his M.A. and B.A. in 1777 and was ordained in Norwich in the same year. He was Vicar of St Nicholas, Lincoln and is supposed to have died 21/11/1786 and be buried in the Cathedral: with William Hett M.A. who was collated on 28/6/1786 and installed on 5/8/1786 as Prebendary for Bedford Minor in Lincoln Cathedral. He died on 21/11/1833 and was buried in the Cathedral. He was also Curate of Greetwell in the same diocese. The Alumni Cantabrigensis has undoubtedly confused the two onto whom little other light can be shed. It seems probable that the author of work was the second William Hett, the Prebendary for Bedford Minor, as most of the discourses were preached in Lincoln Cathedral with which he seems to have a stronger link than the first William Hett.

59. Mant – Puritanism Revived p89
60. Smith – Essays p97
61. Smith – Essays p93
62. Hett – Christian Morality Vol II pp204, 205
63. Hett – Christian Morality Vol II p205n
64. Hett – Christian Morality Vol II p217
65. Hett – Christian Morality Vol II p217
66. Smith – Essays p102
67. Smith – Essays p102
68. Hannah More (1745–1833). From 1787 she became closely acquainted with Wilberforce and Newton. She established some schools in the Mendips and various friendly societies and philanthropic organizations for the relief

of adults. In the 1790's she wrote the Cheap Repository Tracts which were intended to counteract the influence of the French Revolution on the lowest orders. Coelebs in Search of a Wife became the most popular of her books.

69. Smith – Essays p151
70. Smith – Essays pp152–3
71. Smith – Essays p154
72. See the quotation from Styles – Strictures on two Critiques in the Edinburgh Review, on the Subject of Methodism and Missions; with Remarks on the Influence of Reviews, in general, on Morals and Happiness in Smith – Essays p145
73. Smith – Essays p92
74. Mant – Puritanism Revived p12
75. Mant – Puritanism Revived pp4–6
76. Hett – Christian Morality p204
77. Benson – A Defence p48
78. Clift – Incidental Letter p4
79. More – An Estimate of the religion of the fashionable world quoted in Bradley – The Call to Seriousness (1976) p19
80. Ball – Congregationalism in Cornwall (1956) p26
81. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians page opposite p1
82. See Styles' reaction to this charge – Smith – Essays p145

Chapter Six

The Nineteenth Century

This chapter deals with the perceptions of the Evangelical Revival found in writers working between 1830 and the start of the twentieth century. Several exceptions to this have, however, been included. Robert Southey (1774–1843) is best known as a Poet Laureate, and his importance to this work lies in his Life of John Wesley published in 1820, which was the first independent account of Wesley produced. Southey was not particularly concerned by religion and had no point to prove in the writing of Wesley's life [1]. His independent approach ushered in a new phase in the historiography of the Evangelical Revival and has, therefore, been included in this later period. Similarly at the close of the period various works have been included because, despite a date of publication in the twentieth century, they belong to men of nineteenth century background and thought [2].

Before dealing with the views of the Evangelical Revival in this period it should be noted that the use of the term the 'Evangelical Revival' appeared for the first time in the nineteenth century. It was first used by the Congregationalist Robert Vaughan in 1862 and its use became common after 1878 when Lecky and Overton used the term [3].

In the nineteenth century it became possible for writers to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the Evangelical Revival in the same work, since they were no longer called upon either to attack or defend it. Isaac Taylor (1787–1865) was a member of the Anglican communion but had friends among the Dissenting interest. In 1851 he wrote:

At this moment — and the change indicates an immeasurable advance and more important — there is a large class of religious persons, or more strictly speaking, there are several such classes, who would demand, in a writer upon Methodism, far more of serious purpose, and more of sympathy with what is great and good, and more of depth of thought, in a word, more of reality, than would have been required thirty years ago. Wesley, Whitefield, and their contemporaries seem, therefore, so far to have gained upon us of late; and so it is that a writer may now speak of those worthies cordially, and yet not incur the risk of being called 'Methodist'

[4]

The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 removed the taint of second-class citizenship from the Dissenters and must be seen as one of the factors behind a move to evaluation of the Evangelical Revival which, Taylor felt, was required in a writer of his time.

It has been shown that the term 'enthusiast' was levelled at the evangelicals in the eighteenth century as one of abuse, and Sir James Stephen writing in 1838 said that the application of this offensive term was improved by the lack of preciseness in its definition. Indeed, it was applied, in the case of Whitefield, to everything that was remarkable in his character. As the nineteenth century progressed the writers' view of enthusiasm became more and more one of acceptance of the excesses which had led to the application of this term, in the light of what the evangelicals had achieved.

In his Quarterly Review article of 1809 Southey pointed out that Wesley and Whitefield were easy to ridicule in their excesses but should be sympathised with in the light of the fruits of their labours. In his Life of Wesley Southey saw this 'enthusiasm' as a positive not a negative feature:

With all this there was intermingled a large portion of enthusiasm, and no small one of superstition, much that was erroneous, much that was mischievous, much that was dangerous. But had he been less enthusiastic, of a humbler spirit, or a quieter heart, or a maturer judgement, he would never have commenced his undertaking. Sensible only of the good which he was producing, and which he saw produced, he went on courageously and indefatigably in his career [5].

By 1830 Southey was writing of the "honest enthusiasm" of the Methodists [6]. In these words there was still a sense of error in the methods that Wesley and Whitefield had used. Later Taylor sought to reassure his readers that Methodism "was not ushered into the world by a company of brazen tongued and fiery zealots" [7] but by mild and brilliant men. By the end of the century what had been dismissed in the eighteenth century as enthusiasm was not only acceptable but worthy of praise. J.H. Overton, Canon of Peterborough, in writing on Bishop Lavington's Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd, which had drawn parallels between Wesley and his followers and some of the eminent saints of the Roman Communion [8], commented that:

To his own contemporaries it appeared the achievement of a great triumph if he could prove

in frequent cases an almost identical tone of thought in Wesley and in Francis of Assisi or St Francis de Sales. To most minds in our own days it would rather seem as if he were constantly dealing blows which only rebounded upon himself, in comparing his opponent to men whose deep piety and self-denying virtues, however much tinged by the errors of their time and order, worked wonders in the revival of earnest faith [9].

It was now those who had attacked the excesses of Wesley and Whitefield who were easy to ridicule. This growing acceptance of the excesses of the early evangelicals can be seen in the nineteenth century perceptions of field-preaching. As has been shown [10], the move of the evangelicals to preach in the open-air and to itinerate greatly offended eighteenth century sensibilities. However, Southey argued that field-preaching was particularly successful in producing conversions and that as the evangelicals moved from preaching in the open air to preaching in chapels, the good the former accomplished declined [11]. He saw field-preaching as a highly effective medium and wished it to continue. As he wrote to Mrs Hodson in 1830:

but I want to embody in the service of the Church some of that honest enthusiasm which will otherwise be employed against it. I want field preachers while we have an ignorant and brutal population: there can be no other means of reclaiming them. They will not go to church —

the preacher must go to them [12].

Taylor commented that field preaching was contrary to the Laws of the Church but was prepared to admit that for the early evangelicals this was the only efficient means of action to raise the nation from its spiritual torpor. He praised the "scholars and gentlemen" [13] who displayed great courage in their actions. In his opening remarks, however, Taylor had commented that, though the Methodists had undoubtedly profited the nation by their flouting of Church order, he himself had little sympathy with such actions. Nineteenth century writers could see the merit in various facets of the Evangelical Revival but often would not have accepted a recurrence of such features in their own time.

Overton argued that the theology of the Evangelical Revival was that of the Established Church, and one to which most of the nation had a predilection. Many of those who had grown up under the influence of the Revival did not, however, agree. J.H. Newman (1801-90), who was to become one of the leading figures of the Tractarian Movement, almost owed his soul to Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford, an Evangelical who had issued a Commentary on the Bible between 1788 and 1792, as he admitted in his Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864). As a young man Newman also read many of the other leading Evangelical writers [14] but according to his autobiography, had developed "a thorough contempt for the evangelical" [15] by 1833. J.S. Reynolds in his work on The Evangelicals at Oxford (1953) saw the period for 1807-31, in which Newman's views would have been formed, as one of expanding influence for the Evangelicals in Oxford who were exerting a steady pressure at all levels. Knox, in his work on The Tractarian Movement (1933), argued that the Evangelical representation in Oxford at this time was inadequate, as was Newman's acquaintance with them and their teaching.

Whether Newman's perception of the Evangelicals was faithful to them, or not, it cannot be denied that he saw their inadequacy as theological. He observed that the evangelical religion had "no intellectual basis, no internal idea, no principle of unity, no theology" [16]. This inadequacy was hidden by a maze of words but, Newman argued, the evangelicals could not truly claim to hold any position fully.

E.B. Pusey (1800–1882) had been brought up under Evangelical influences, but eventually became a Tractarian leader although he professed to retain a love of the Evangelicals. According to Liddon, his biographer, Pusey saw the Evangelical movement as one-sided; it concentrated upon a few chapters in the writings of St Paul and interpreted these in such a way as to ignore much of the rest of scripture. In focusing attention on the needs and salvation of the individual believer, rather than on the corporate union of all believers in the Church, the Evangelicals were leaving out much of Christian religion. This lack of breadth was something which Pusey, Newman and other Tractarians sought to rectify by stressing other areas of Christian revelation.

William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) was brought up by an ardently evangelical mother but held Tractarian principles from an early age. In his Gleanings of Past Years published in 1879 Gladstone admitted that the evangelicals had done a great deal to revive the preaching of the Gospel in England but regretted the limitations of the Evangelical movement. He argued that it was narrow in its outlook and faulty in quality because it did not "comprehend the elements necessary for its own permanent immunity from deteriorating influences" [17]. Leslie Stephen agreed that the Evangelical Revival had a highly limited theology and suggested that, though it was capable of stirring vast numbers of people, it was of no interest to the

historian of thought, as it was a movement

confined within narrow limits, ossified into a set of barren theories, never violated by contact with genuine thought [18].

It has been shown that the children of the Evangelical Revival withdrew from it as the narrowness of its intellectual outlook continued to leave them unsatisfied. They retained a respect for the earliest men of the revival but regretted the way that the religion of these men, which was narrow in the first place, had narrowed even further. Newman continued to admire the work of Scott, the Bible commentator and Milner, the ecclesiastical historian but saw nothing of interest in those around him. Overton was one of the few nineteenth century writers, who saw that the evangelical religion of the early nineteenth century was but a mere shadow of its former self. It had become so simplified that it was open to impersonation:

For it was extremely easy to catch the tone and phraseology of Evangelicalism. Its whole teaching was compressed within a very narrow compass. The repeating of a few shibboleths, the abstaining from a very few tabooed practices, the occasional attendance at the proper kind of church, the investment of a very small amount of money in support of the right sort of societies, was enough to stamp a man as 'serious' [19].

The narrow theology of the eighteenth century had disappeared to nothing by the early nineteenth century.

Despite the perceived weakness in theology the results of the

Evangelical Revival were highly praised; it could not be denied that it had revived the practice of religion throughout England and, most particularly, in the lower classes. Almost all the writers of the nineteenth century saw this as a worthwhile exercise. However, the social effects of the Revival were to a great extent ignored. Overton, in reviewing the results of the Revival, briefly noted that the Evangelical Revival was instrumental in checking the Revolutionary and sceptical spirit of the period around the French Revolution, but all the other results he listed were religious.

Southey did note the social consequences of Methodism in his work. He argued that the Methodists had familiarised the lower classes with the idea of:

combining in association, making rules for their
own governance, raising funds and communicating
from one part of the kingdom to another [20].

though he admitted that they did not first hear of this from the Methodists. On a more positive note Southey argued that the effect of the Methodists on the lower orders had been to inculcate loyalty and to turn them into good civil subjects. Its effects on the upper classes were, however totally for the worst. He claimed that:

It narrowed their views and feelings; burdened
them with forms, restricted them from
recreations which keep the mind in health;
discouraged, if it did not absolutely prohibit,
accomplishments that gave a grace to life:
separated them from general society; substituted
a sectarian in place of a catholic spirit, and by
alienating them from the national church,

weakened the strongest cement of social order
and loosened the ties whereby men are bound to
their native land. It carried disunion and
discord into private life, breaking up families
and friendships [21].

This position is unique among the nineteenth century writers surveyed in this chapter; elsewhere it has been argued that the effects of the Evangelical Revival on the upper classes were favourable, giving them a greater philanthropic impulse which led to the foundation of various societies, most of which had religious aims. The effects on the poor in reviving a religious spirit among them was also seen as positive, except in the mind of Southey, as shown above, and in the work of Lecky.

W.E.H. Lecky (1838–1903) was not allied to any particular part of the Church. In his England in the Eighteenth Century (1878) he saw Methodism as a form of religious terrorism which was perfectly fitted to exploit the weakness of mind of many of its hearers and restrict their enjoyment of innocent pleasures [22]. He did not see the results of the Revival as positive but, rather as repressing the hearers by scaring them into a highly restricted life devoid of many of life's normal amusements.

It is now necessary to examine the different perspectives of the whole Evangelical Revival as seen by the nineteenth century. The first man to use the term 'Evangelical Revival' extensively was J.H. Overton and it is logical to start with his perception of the feature. For him the Revival began in the spring of 1738 when John Wesley was converted at Aldersgate. This Revival was then spread by the works of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, primarily through itinerant field preaching. Fletcher of Madeley was added as the fourth leader of the Wesleyan branch of the Evangelical

Revival. Overton was apologetic, but firm, in saying that the Countess of Huntingdon could not be included among the foremost agents of the Revival, for despite her efforts to convert the upper classes her success was highly limited.

Overton's concept of the Evangelical Revival was not confined to Methodism. Under the title he included the phenomenon of Evangelicalism which as he rightly pointed out, was all too often confused with Methodism in the eighteenth century. These two were seen as parts of one great religious movement which could only truly be divided with hindsight. In an attempt to exemplify this division he stated that the two parties could be delineated by examining their viewpoints on the parochial system, the Evangelicals being those who held tightly to the order of such a system. But Overton admitted that on an individual basis it may have been very difficult to classify people correctly until the close of the eighteenth century.

In attempting to examine the relationship between the Methodists and the Evangelicals, Overton stated that many of the Evangelical clergy had come to their opinions quite without the help of the Methodists, to whom they were often opposed in externals [23]. This observation ruled out the idea that the Evangelicals were children of the Methodist revival. If such a relationship is denied it is necessary to see how the Methodists and Evangelicals were in fact linked. For Overton the Evangelical Revival was not a movement with some new theology, instead it was solely a movement which sought a reordering in the perceived hierarchy of thought. Overton wrote:

The truths which they brought into prominence
were not new truths, nor truths which were
actually denied, but they were truths which

acquired under the vigorous preaching of the revivalists a freshness and a vitality, and an influence over man's practice, which they had to a great extent ceased to exercise. In this sense the revival of which we are to treat may with propriety be termed the Evangelical Revival [24].

During the opening years of the nineteenth century the Evangelical party became the strongest party within the Church of England but it declined in the second quarter of the century with the rise of the Oxford Movement. However, for Overton this decline was only a discarding of the accidents and not the essence of evangelical religion.

In 1906 A History of The English Church from the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century appeared. This book was attributed to Overton, who had died in 1903, and Relton. Unfortunately, no indication is given as to the authorship of each individual section, though the preface states that a plan and extensive notes were found in Overton's papers and that these were filled out by Relton. This work shows several inconsistencies of viewpoint when compared with previous writings of Overton. The Countess of Huntingdon has been raised from the position she previously occupied to one of prominent leadership within the Evangelical Revival [25]. An even more significant change appears in the role given to John Wesley. Previously he had been "by far the most conspicuous character connected with the Revival" [26] and "the most effective worker connected with the early phase of the Evangelical revival" [27]. He now becomes "the prime mover of the Evangelical revival" [28]. Such a distinction may seem trivial but it shows a movement in which Wesley is more of an instigator, the single individual to whom all is owed, rather than a cog in a mechanism

which has an existence independent of him. This, however, may overstate the case somewhat. This posthumous work of Overton, though it accentuates the gaps between the Methodists and the Evangelicals, presents a view of a unity of outlook and agreement of position within a single Evangelical Revival — essentially the same view as that seen in Overton's earlier works.

Overton's view of the Evangelical Revival was not the only one produced by a nineteenth century writer. Sir James Stephen (1789–1859) rose to the rank of Colonial under Secretary. He was brought up as an evangelical and never avowedly changed his views. Stephen was married to Jane Catherine, daughter of John Venn, the Evangelical Rector of Clapham. He was a workaholic who dictated his contributions to the Edinburgh Review in ten page sections before breakfast. These were published posthumously in his Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography (1872). Stephen concerned himself most with the Evangelical party within the Church of England. He saw a continuity from the 1730's into the next century which put him in line with Overton, and he showed a great admiration for Wesley and his role as founder, lawgiver, and head of an ecclesiastical dynasty. The direct ancestry of the Evangelicals was traced from Whitefield, however, and the four leading Evangelicals within the Church of England were designated as John Newton, Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner and Henry Venn. Newton was seen as the perfect example of the regenerative effect of evangelical religion, Scott as its interpreter of Holy Scripture, Venn its systematic teacher of christian Institutes, and Milner as its ecclesiastical historian. The reliance of such men on Methodism and Whitefield in particular was then outlined:

the coincidence with the spirit and doctrines of
the Methodists, and especially of Whitfield, was

such as to forbid the belief that there existed no other relations between the two bodies, but that of simultaneous existence. It has already, indeed, been shown, that Newton was the disciple of Whitfield, that Scott was the disciple of Newton, and that Milner was his imitator; and it would be very easy to show that Venn lived in a long and friendly intercourse with the great Itinerant [29].

The Evangelicals were descendants of Whitefield but were not emulators. The two parties were different, particularly on ecclesiastical polity, and here Stephen agrees with the later Overton. Stephen was either unaware of, or did not acknowledge the work of Berridge and Grimshaw, who had reached their evangelical opinions without the aid of Wesley or Whitefield, but the former is unlikely in the light of Stephen's close relationship to Venn and other leading Evangelicals. It can only be assumed then, that it was the irregularity of these men that led Stephen to classify them purely as Methodists.

Isaac Taylor argued that such movements as the Evangelical Revival did not continue from generation to generation. Though he dated the religious epoch in which he lived from the field-preaching of Wesley and Whitefield he stated that the "Methodism of the eighteenth century has, we say, ceased to have any extant representative among us" [30]. The evangelical Christianity of the nineteenth century was descended from the work of the middle of the eighteenth century but the method of transmission was through the Countess of Huntingdon and the ministers who gathered around her. This was the means of transmission of the initial elementary

evangelical impulse from the early Methodists to those involved in the Evangelical philanthropy of the early nineteenth century, but Taylor would deny that they both belonged to the same movement and could be united in a common phenomenon of the Evangelical Revival. He wrote:

From out of this elementary evangelical impulse there sprang, after a time, and as its proper consequence, the modern evangelic philanthropy — issuing in the missionary enterprise; but the two, though related as cause and effect are not to be confounded, nor should they be spoken of as one and the same. A wide unmeasured space had been silently traversed by the Christian community during the few years that elapsed between the subsidence of the Methodistic energy, and the origination of Missionary and Bible Societies [31].

Taylor did not put an exact date to this 'wide unmeasured space', nor did he attribute it to any particular phenomenon. It was used in an undefined state to divide the revival of religion in England chronologically, and not into parties as before. Furthermore, Taylor did not advance a theory of an Evangelical Revival but two movements of an original evangelic impulse which later resulted in an evangelic philanthropy whose religious animation came from the earlier movement by an ephemeral religious transmission but was divided from it by a 'wide unmeasured space'.

A similar view was held by G.W.E. Russell in his A Short History of the Evangelical Movement (1915). He outlined a religious movement which sprang from the work of Wesley, Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon.

In 1791, however, when all these people were dead, this religious revival had somewhat lost its way so that in both the upper and lower classes most were returning to the practical heathenism they had enjoyed before the late 1730's. As these leaders passed away a second revival arose through the revulsion of many at the impieties of the French Revolutions later excesses. This was the 'second spring' of the Evangelical Movement which owed much to Wesley but which was distinctly separate from the first revival. Taylor and Russell did not hold a concept of the Evangelical Revival as Overton would have seen it, instead they saw a series of revivals which owed something to each other but could not truly be classed as one great revival.

The most common view of the Evangelical Revival was, however, that of Overton's. M. Pattison (1813-84), in the infamous Essays and Reviews of 1860, contributed an essay on the "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England 1688-1850". He was brought up as a strict Evangelical but came under the influence of Newman at Oxford, though this Tractarianism was also later renounced as Pattison moved outside the limits of institutional Christianity. His work did not contain extensive reference to the Evangelical Revival but his opinions expressed in the work coincided with those of Overton. Gladstone, another child of the revival whose viewpoint altered in later life, held a similar view to Overton; that of one great religious movement sweeping through the country, with positive results [32]. G.G. Perry, a fellow and tutor of Lincoln college, Oxford, explained the Revival in terms which neatly encapsulated the later Overton in his 1864 History of the Church of England:

The awakening might seem waiting to come of necessity with the removal of the causes which opposed it, but an impulse was also needed, so

long had been the torpor, so entire had been the Forgetfulness. This impulse was furnished in part, as has already been said, by the zeal and earnestness of what was called the Evangelical party. Taking their inspiration [N.B. not their conversion] from the labours and success of the more irregular revivalists Wesley and Whitefield, a large band of clergy, many of whom were labouring in the more populous towns, began to move the heart of the country by their eloquent sermons, their frequent and zealous ministrations, and the devotion of their lives to the work of religion. But their influence, as has been indicated, was necessarily a limited one, as their system was only a partial embodiment of truth and right. Something more was needed, which they, from the peculiar bias of their judgements could not supply [33].

These works have been grouped as having a similar perception to Overton's work because, although it is a later work, it stands out because it makes full use of the term Evangelical Revival for the first time as well as concentrating solely on that and not on it as part of something else.

Before closing this chapter it is necessary to examine the scope of the Evangelical Revival as portrayed in the nineteenth century. All were agreed that the Revival had affected the Established Church and provoked Methodism, but very few concern themselves with divisions within Methodism as Mant had done in his 1808 Puritanism revived; or Methodism

as old as the Great Rebellion. In a series of Letters from a curate to his rector [34], Only G.W.E. Russell, Luke Tyerman, an ardent Wesleyan Methodist, and Overton made any attempt to examine or acknowledge the variations included under the term Methodist, instead of using it as a blanket term as their peers did.

The role of Dissent in the Evangelical Revival also received very little coverage from the writers of the nineteenth century. Those works which did recognise Dissent only noted it for its increase in strength in the latter part of the eighteenth and earliest part of the nineteenth centuries. Skeats in his History of the Free Churches in England 1688-1891 (1891) noticed that much of this resurgence in the Dissenting interest arose from the problem of evangelical succession; if an evangelical minister of the Established Church was succeeded by one of a different character, the evangelical congregation which remained often seceded from the National Church and joined the ranks of the Dissenters. Selbie, the Principal of Mansfield College Oxford, writing on Nonconformity (1912) argued that the influence of the Evangelical Revival was only felt very gradually by the Dissenters in a warming and quickening of Dissent so that it became more evangelistic and less formal. Most nineteenth century writers, however, did not concern themselves with the influences of the Evangelical Revival on Dissent.

In conclusion, it has been shown that nineteenth century writers saw the Evangelical Revival as a narrow and static movement. It was narrow because they concentrated on its religious aspects to the almost total exclusion of any of its social, political or economic consequences, and because they concentrated almost totally on the Established Church and Methodism to the exclusion of a full consideration of Dissent, which according to Overton and Relton grew from being one in twenty-four

churchmen at the beginning of the eighteenth century to one in four by the beginning of the nineteenth [35]. Even accounting for the fact that Methodism was included in these figures it is a noticeable increase. To ignore this in writing on the Evangelical Revival was to take a narrow viewpoint. It was static because though many writers, especially those who had been brought up in an Evangelical background, perceived a decline in the Revival as the nineteenth century progressed very few of them saw any changes before this period. The Calvinistic Controversy was almost completely ignored. The Evangelical Revival was seen as a religious movement which was preaching the same gospel at the end as it was in the beginning, preaching moreover in the same style, and with the same methods and successes. This narrow, static view meant that almost all the writers were able to see the Evangelical Revival as a single movement except in the cases of Stephen, Taylor and Russell.

The nineteenth century writers were much kinder to the Revival than their eighteenth century counterparts. J.H. Overton, a High Churchman, praised the Revival in the light of its results. He would not have wished to see a repetition of its methods in his own century but accepted and even condoned the breaking of Church order in the eighteenth century in the light of what such irregularity had achieved.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. See C.C. Southey – Life of Southey (1850) Vol IV pp293–4; Vol V p34
2. Plummer – The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century (1910)
3. Vaughan – English Nonconformity p464; Lecky – England in the Eighteenth Century Vol II p639; Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century Vol II Chapter title.
4. Taylor – Wesley and Methodism p7
5. Southey – Life of Wesley Vol I p207
6. See C.C. Southey – Life of Southey Vol VI p93
7. Taylor – Wesley and Methodism – pp153–4
8. See page 25
9. Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century Vol I pp594–5
10. See pages 19–20
11. Southey – Life of Wesley p269
12. C.C. Southey – Life of Southey Vol VI p93
13. Taylor – Wesley and Methodism p34
14. Eg Romaine, Milner
15. Newman – Apologia Pro Vita Sua p114
16. Newman – Apologia Pro Vits Sua p192
17. Gladstone – Gleanings of Past Years Vol V p12
18. Stephen – Thought in the Eighteenth Century (1876) p431
19. Overton – The English Church in the Nineteenth Century pp99–100.
There is a similar view in Stephen – Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography p446
20. Southey – Life of Wesley Vol II p271
21. Southey – Life of Wesley Vol II p262
22. Lecky – England in the Eighteenth Century Vol II pp582, 639

23. Samuel Walker was opposed to itinerant field-preaching yet remained a close friend and correspondent of Wesley.
24. Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century
Vol II p59
25. See p102
26. Overton – The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century p9
27. Abbey and Overton – The English Church in the Eighteenth Century
Vol II p63
28. Overton and Relton – A History of the Church of England from the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century 1714–1800 p73
29. Stephen – Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography p445. Stephen always spelt Whitefield without the 'e'
30. Taylor – Wesley and Methodism p5
31. Taylor – Wesley and Methodism p194
32. Gladstone – Gleanings of Past Years Vol VII p225
33. Perry – History of the Church of England Vol III p561
34. See pages 82–3
35. Overton and Relton – A History of the Church of England from the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century 1714–1800 p249

Chapter Seven

The Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

This chapter reviews the ways in which the Evangelical Revival was seen in the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the previous chapters the works surveyed have been specific attacks or defences of evangelicalism, and the following chapter will review modern histories and critical works on the Evangelical Revival. The works in this chapter are often not directly concerned with evangelical beliefs and the interpretation of the Evangelical Revival has had to be extracted from the work. This, however, is more relevant to the nineteenth century works, as many of the eighteenth century writings were thinly veiled attacks on Methodism; few were defences. It must be remembered that to the eighteenth century writer the term Methodist enveloped all those who held evangelical beliefs and not just those typically belonging to the Wesleyan Connexion.

The first reference to Methodism in literature was made in 1742. In 1728 Alexander Pope had published the Dunciad, a work of three volumes which was an elaborate satire of society and all its foibles. In 1742 he added a fourth volume and made some additions to the other volumes. A revision of Book II read as follows:

So swells each wind-pipe: ass intones to ass,
 Harmonic twang! of leather, horn and brass;
 Such as from labouring lungs th'enthusiast blows,
 High sounds, attemper'd to the vocal nose;
 Or such as bellow from the deep divine;
 There Webster! peal'd thy voice, and Whitfield thine!...

In Tottenham fields, the brethren with amaze

Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze! [1]

Webster and Whitefield were both men who had commented adversely on Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses. Warburton had previously written in defence of Pope and this reference merely returned the favour. Pope was a Roman Catholic nearing the end of his life and had no direct knowledge of Methodism, and passed on the common charge of enthusiasm which, as it has been shown, was levelled at the early Methodists.

Henry Fielding (1707–54), whom Gibbon linked by lineage with the Hapsburgs, produced The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and his Friend Mr Abraham Adams: Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes in 1742. In Chapter XVII two parsons, Mr Adams and Dr Barnabas, discussed with a bookseller the possibility of publishing some of Mr Adams sermons. The bookseller was reluctant to publish unless they were written by Wesley, Whitefield or a bishop as these were the only sermons which sold. This led the two clergymen to discuss Methodism. Mr Barnabas was bitterly opposed to Methodism. Mr Adams, an orthodox and conscientious clergyman, was an opponent of usury and splendour in the clergy in a similar manner to Mr Whitefield but became opposed to the latter 'when he began to call nonsense and enthusiasm to his aid' [2].

John Byron (1692–1763) was a zealous Churchman, though not a clergyman, with Jacobite sympathies. He had the habit of putting everything into rhyme — theological and historical arguments, petitions to the King, and even translations from the mystical theology of Ruysbroek, Boehme and William Law. He became acquainted with the Wesleys in 1731 and looked favourably on the Methodist movement in his poetry. In 1751 he published A Poetical Essay on Enthusiasm which tried to show that the word

'enthusiasm' was often misapplied and that even when correctly applied some enthusiasm was praiseworthy and not culpable:

Think not that you are no enthusiast then:
 All men are such, as sure as they are men.
 The thing itself is not at all to blame...
 You need not go to cloisters or to cells,
 Monks or field-preachers, to see where it dwells:
 It dwells alike in balls and masquerades;
 Courts, camp and 'Changes, it alike pervades.
 There be enthusiasts, who love to sit
 In coffee-houses, and cant out their wit...
 Fly from Enthusiasm? Yes, fly from air,
 And breathe it more intensely for your care...
 Bend all your wits against it, 'tis in vain,
 It must exist or profane...
 Blame not enthusiasm, if rightly bent [3].

This poem did not mention it but the linkage of Methodism and Enthusiasm in the popular mind would have left no doubt as to the point of Byron's reference. He pointed out that enthusiasm was everywhere and asked whether Methodism might not be a culpable but a praiseworthy example of it.

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) made three references to Methodism in his 1753 epistolary novel The History of Sir Charles Grandison.

Richardson regretted the laxity in many clergymen of the Established Church but saw Methodists as overdoers who "made religion look unlovely" [4].

The literature of the eighteenth century did not only present the

Methodists as enthusiasts. In Amelia (1751) Fielding introduced Cooper, a Methodist who was portrayed as a thief who returned the stolen property when a reward was offered for its return. Cooper claimed that he had not returned the property before because he had not known whose it was. Cooper was portrayed as a hypocrite [5].

Thus far from the beginning of the Evangelical Revival the references to it had been minimal in both size and number. The situation changed in the 1760's. Late in 1759 Whitefield preached a sermon against attending theatres. The Methodist writer of A Discourse concerning Plays and Players. Occasioned by a late and very extraordinary Sermon, in which some sentiments relative to the above subjects were delivered in a very copious and affecting manner, from the Pulpit of a certain popular Preacher of the Society called Methodists (1789) had recently grown in favour of theatres and was offended by Whitefield's sermon as it threatened theatre goers with damnation. The Monthly Review (1759) also attacked the sermon bitterly [6]. John Wesley's similar opposition to the theatre was also known. His 1764 letter to the mayor and corporation of Bristol showed his concern about the influence of the theatre:

the present stage entertainers sap the foundation of all religion, as they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men; but as they are peculiarly hurtful to a trading city; giving a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business; and as drinking and debauchery of every kind are constant attendants on these

entertainments, with indolence, effeminacy, and idleness, which affect trade in a high degree [7].

If the Methodists were opposed to drama, it was not surprising that dramatists were opposed to Methodism. The opposition was led by Samuel Foote (1720–71). He was born at Truro in Cornwall, the son of an M.P., studied at Worcester College, Oxford, and entered the Temple, but, having squandered his fortune, he was forced to become an actor and dramatic writer. The Minor was first performed in Dublin on 28 January 1760 and soon transferred to London. This was Foote's most successful play and a merciless attack on Methodism. In the introduction Foote discussed the subject of his most recent play and showed his reasons for attacking Methodism:

Foote: I may produce something that may hit
your palate

Smart: Your bill of fare?

Foote: What think you of those itinerant field
orators, who tho'at declared enmity
with common sense, have the address
to poison the principles, and at the
same time pick the pockets of half our
industrious fellow subjects?

Canker: Have a care. Dangerous ground.
Ludere cum sacris [8], you know.

Foote: Now I look upon it in a different
manner. I consider these gentlemen
in the light of public performers, like
myself, and whether we exhibit at

Tottenham-court, or the Haymarket,
our purpose is the same, and the place
is immaterial.

Canker: Why indeed, if it be considered.

Foote: Nay, more, I must beg leave to assert,
that ridicule is the only antidote
against this pernicious poison. This
is a madness that argument can
never cure: and should a little
wholesome severity be applied,
persecution would be the immediate
cry; where there can we have
recourse, but to the comic muse,
perhaps the archness and severity of
her smile may redress an evil, that
the laws cannot reach, or reason
reclaim [9].

In the main body of the play the attack on Methodism is by Mrs Cole, one of the three parts which Foote himself played. Cole was a regular attender at meetings held at the Tabernacle in Tottenham-Court Road, where the preacher was Mr Squintum [10]. Mrs Cole bribed Sir George's man-servant Dick in an attempt to get him to go to the Tabernacle, and his master, on hearing of this, told Dick that he would have made a teacher among them. The servant protested that he was too ignorant for this but Sir George informed him that the Spirit would have provided the knowledge. Mrs Cole continued in her role, which was little more than that of a madame in a brothel, whilst rebuking another character for asking for burgundy, an idle

vanity. Throughout the play Mrs Cole stressed her debt to Mr Squintum for her new birth to a regenerate life Foote portrayed Mrs Cole as a hypocrite who reconciled her new birth with her previous calling and at the close she was attacked by Sir George in words which were supposed to refer to all Methodists as those who:

inflexibly proceed in the practice of every vice,
impiously prostituting the most sacred
institutions to the most infernal purposes [11].

These samples can only give a taste of The Minor which attacked Methodism in such rude and profane language that even profligate London society was shocked and Foote was forced to make various alterations to make the work less objectionable. Even the Monthly Review (1760), an organ usually critical of Methodism, condemned the play. The Christian and Critical Remarks on a Droll, or Interlude, called 'The Minor', now acting by a Company of Stage-Players in the Hay-Market, and said to be acted by Authority; in which the Blasphemy, Falsehood, and Scurrility of that Piece are properly considered, answered, and exposed (1760), as the title suggested deplored the debasing of the stage by the introduction of real and living characters and the profaning of the Spirit of God. The play produced a pamphlet controversy in which Foote took part to defend his play [12]. The Minor precipitated other farces directed against Methodism. In 1761 An Additional Scene to the Comedy of 'The Minor' appeared and was joined by The Register Office: a Farce of Two Acts (1761) which presented a similar story to The Minor but changed the names. For this work the most interesting sequel was The Methodist: a Comedy: being a Continuation and Completion of the Plan of 'The Minor' written by Mr Foote: as it was intended to have been acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, but for obvious

reasons suppressed (1760). This work by Israel Pottinger was another excessive attack on Whitefield as Squintum; it levelled no specific charge but generally ridiculed all of Methodism in a more bawdy manner than the original.

Despite the public outcry at Foote's work it was highly successful, and even Pottinger's banned play reached three editions [13]. Foote was a prolific writer who continued to ridicule and mimic Methodism. In 1766 he had both legs amputated after a riding accident but he continued to write and act. In all, there were allusions and references to Methodism in ten of his plays. Throughout he portrayed the Methodists as hypocrites who were as immoral as any. He ascribed this state of affairs to the doctrines they held and preached. He died in 1777 and was privately interred in Westminster Abbey.

Another playwright who attacked Methodism was Isaac Bickerstaffe (1735–1812). In The Hypocrite of 1768 he presented a Methodist character Mr Maw–worm. At one point Old Lady Lambert [OLL] enquired what was the matter with Mr Maw–worm [Maw]. He replied:

Maw: I don't know what's the matter with
me — I'm a breaking my heart — I
think it's a sin to keep a shop

OLL: Why, if you think it is a sin, indeed —
pray, what's your business?

Maw: We deals in grocery, tea, small–beer,
charcoal, butter, brick–dust and the
like.

OLL: Well, you must consult with your
friendly director here.

Maw: I want to go a preaching.

OLL: Do you?

Maw: I'm almost sure I have had a call.

OLL: Ay!

Maw: I does them extempory, because I
can't write: and now the devils in
our alley says, as how my head's
turned.

OLL: Ay devils indeed, — but don't you
mind them.

Maw: No, I don't — I rebukes them and
preaches to them, whether they will or
not. We lets our house in lodgings to
single men; and sometimes I gets
them together, with one or two of the
neighbours, and makes them all cry.

OLL: Did you ever preach in public?

Maw: I got up on Kennington Common the
last review day, but the boys threw
brick-bats at me, and pinned crackers
to my tail and I have been afraid to
mount ever since...

OLL: But how do you mind your business?

Maw: We have lost almost all our
customers, because I keeps extorting
them whenever they come into the
shop [14].

From this quotation it can be seen that this play levelled criticisms at

Methodism similar to those which had been produced earlier in the century [15] — those of the disruption of society, uneducated preachers and pretensions to gifts of the spirit. For example, the leading character, Dr Cantwell, or The Hypocrite, was the man who had influenced Maw-worm. Cantwell was supposed to be a caricature of either Wesley or Whitefield, and was portrayed as a dangerous hypocrite who hid more dangerous aspects under an outward show of righteousness. Bickerstaffe was forced to flee the country in 1772 on a capital charge and produced no more plays after this date.

It has been shown that Methodism was strongly ridiculed and attacked by novels and plays in the 1760's. A similar state of affairs existed in poetry. Charles Churchill (1731–1764) was called the 'British Juvenal'. He was the son of a clergyman and succeeded to his father's curacy and lectureship in Westminster, but his extravagant lifestyle soon forced him to resign these positions. In the Ghost of Cock Lane (1763) Churchill attacked Whitefield and the Methodists and accused them of enthusiasm and hypocrisy. A close friend of Churchill was Robert Lloyd (1733–1764), who died of a broken heart on hearing of his friend's death, and the loss of these two poets led to the death of Churchill's sister to whom Lloyd was betrothed. In his Tale R. Lloyd described a Methodist, Caecilia, who spoke anything but the truth:

Caecilia, too, with saint-like air,
 But lately come from evening pray'r,
 Who knew her duty, as a saint,
 Always to pray, and not to faint,
 And, rain or shine, her church ne'er mist,
 Prude, devotee and Methodist

With equal zeal the cause promoted,
 Misconstru'd things, and words misquoted
 Misrepresented, misapplied,
 And, inspiration being her guide,
 The very heart of man dissected,
 And to his principles objected [16].

R. Lloyd's poems also accused the Methodists of neglecting their children, moving from church to church, and giving money to preachers which ought to go to creditors, whilst claiming to be sanctified. Evan Lloyd (1734–1764) produced a poem called the Methodist in 1766, in which Wesley and Whitefield were portrayed as followers of Satan. The lay itinerants were also attacked for their lack of education [17].

Methodism was also attacked in The Mimic of 1761. Christopher Anstey's 1766 New Bath Guide contained The Methodist and Mimick. A Tale in Hudibrastic Verse by Peter Paragraph and the five book Methodism Triumphant, or the decisive Battle between the Old Serpent and the Modern Saint of 1767. This last work was written by Dr Nathaniel Lancaster, Rector of Stanford Rivers in Essex, who published six more anti-Methodist poems in 1767. The attacking of Methodism in poetry was not uncommon in the 1760's. The last examples of this poetry to be considered in this chapter were written by Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770). His first attack was made at the age of eleven in Apostate Will. His most famous poems were the Rowley poems, whose brilliance was later agreed upon [18], and which were written in 1769. In the same year he produced his most vehement attacks on Methodism. His Journal contained a series of verses which mocked the piety of the Methodists and portrayed Whitefield as a hypocrite. Whitefield's squint was again made a butt of mockery:

Reason tortur'd, scripture twisted,
 Into every form of fancy:
 Forms which never yet existed,
 And but his oblique optics can see [19]

The Defence of Christmas Day 1769 again attacked Methodism as claiming to be the only way to salvation. The Methodist of May 1770 portrayed the Methodists as hypocrites:

... 'Tis very odd
 These representatives of God,
 In colour, way of life and evil,
 Should be so very like the devil [20],

Again in describing Jack, a Methodist:

Jack, or to write more gravely, John,
 Thro' hills of Wesley's works had gone,
 Could sing one hundred hymns by rote,
 Hymns that will sanctify the throte:
 But some indeed compos'd so oddly,
 You'd swear 'twas bawdy songs made godly [21].

In this quotation, as in all the works which appeared in both poetry and plays in the great upsurge in anti-Methodist literature in the 1760's, the main accusation was that the Methodists were hypocrites who used religion as a cover for evil practices. They were accused of the whole gamut of immoral actions; charges of acting for temporal gain were commonplace [22] and Anstey's Bath Guide suggested that Roger sought only to seduce his Methodist convert, Prudence. Foote and others [23] continued to portray Methodism in this light into the 1770's. In other spheres of literature the situation had, however, changed.

Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) in his History of England of 1765 denounced the Methodists as enthusiastic fanatics [24]. In 1766, in his Travels through France and Italy, Smollett claimed that all fanatics were hypocrites whose lives were as debased as any others [25]. However, The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker of 1770 portrayed a Methodist who was not denounced as a fanatic but was valued by his master. Humphrey Clinker was the servant of Mr Bramble, and was arrested on the charge of having robbed a coach. He was convicted, despite his innocence of the crime, and imprisoned at Clerkenwell. Mr Bramble and his family visited the prison where the jailor complained that Clinker's preaching was a menace because it had stopped the consumption of liquor in the prison and was, thereby, ruining the jailor's nice little sideline. Clinker was shown to be causing good results through his preaching in cutting liquor consumption in the prison, and when he was released Mr Bramble praised him thus:

He has commended himself to the whole of our family by his talents of preaching, praying and singing psalms, which he exercises with such effect. If there were anything like affectation or hypocrisy in this excess of religion I would not keep him in my service; but so far as I can observe, the fellow's character is downright simplicity, warmed with a kind of enthusiasm, which renders him very susceptible of gratitude and attachment to his benefactors [26].

The Methodist was valued for the results of his work, though Smollett still denounced the dangers of fanaticism and its ensuing hypocrisy.

Richard Graves (1715–1804) was rector of Claverton near Bath. In

1772 he published Don Quixote: The Spiritual Quixote or The Summer's Ramble of Mr Geoffrey Wildgoose: A comic Romance which satirised the illiteracy and fanaticism of certain Methodist types. Though he was a clergyman of the Established Church he admitted that there was some cause for complaint against the clergy, but complained that ignorant itinerant preachers caused ecclesiastical anarchy. Dr Greville, a country clergyman in the novel, admitted that Wesley and the other leaders of the Methodist movement were "men of sound learning and true devotion" [27] and that the fruits of their work were probably of good to the Establishment. Both Graves and Smollett were opposed to fanaticism and excess in religion but, unlike the writers of the previous decade, they were prepared to see more than this in Methodism and admitted that it had had some positive effects. It has been shown in Chapter Two that the external attacks on Methodism declined in the late 1760's and 1770's as Methodism itself became more respectable, and the novels cited above must be seen as part of this decline.

William Cowper (1731–1800) was educated with Charles Churchill at Westminster, but instead of attacking Methodism in poetry he became the 'Poet of Methodism'. He lived at Olney from 1767 to 1795 under the influence of John Newton and Thomas Scott, and his poetry contained clear references in support of the Methodist cause and its leaders. In Hope (1782) Cowper praised the Methodist revival:

God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound:
That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day [28].

In the same poem he eulogized Whitefield, who had been dead for ten years. Whitefield was also included in his poem Conversation (1782) which

contained the following tribute to John Wesley:

Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain
 Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
 A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
 Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
 Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
 Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed:
 A man that would have foil'd at their own play
 A dozen would-be's of the modern day [29].

Cowper treated Methodism as a positive contribution to society, and was the first in the realm of literature to follow such a line. Unfortunately, Cowper was forced to care for a paralysed woman in later life and wrote no original poetry after the late 1780's.

As has been shown in Chapter Five, the 1790's were a decade of high political tension. Methodism was attacked in many pamphlets as were all those who held evangelical beliefs. In the world of literature, however, it was a quiet period for Methodist works, and the only one discovered has been the anonymous The Fair Methodist: or such Things are. In the course of a Tour from London to Canterbury and Dover, Bath and Bristol Hot-Wells. A Serious Novel of 1794. This attacked Methodists as a deluded and hypocritical people.

The nineteenth century was primarily the age of the novel; hence the only poet who will be considered in the chapter is George Crabbe (1754-1832), a clergyman of the Church of England. He heard John Wesley preach at Lowestoft on 15 October 1790 and was impressed by the appearance and piety of the aging Methodist. However The Parish Register and Sir Eustace Grey, both of 1807, contained unfavourable comments on evangelical conversions.

In 1810 he published The Borough, which showed an awareness of the various divisions within the Methodists and the preface claimed that he sought to expose the spirit of the enthusiast and bigot and not his specific opinions and practices. The same approach can be seen in The Tales of the Hall of 1818. Throughout these poems Crabbe considered the Methodists as fanatics who were, somehow, beyond reason. They were especially portrayed as leading men away from the Established Church.

One novelist has been elevated above the other great novelists of the century in the light of the quality of his work, and it is to Dickens that this chapter refers first. Charles Dickens (1812–70) was educated at a school in Chatham run by Rev William Giles, an evangelical, though his parents were not evangelical and he was not brought up as one. Dickens also occasionally attended the Providence Baptist Chapel in his childhood and witnessed Giles' preaching which was described in The Uncommercial Traveller (1867–8) Giles assumed the role of the 'Boanerges boiler' and the following autobiographical passage showed how Dickens developed a dislike of Dissent on these occasional visits to the chapel:

and at this present writing I hear his lumbering
jocularly (which never amused us, though we
basely pretended that it did), and I behold his big
round face, and I look up the inside of his
outstretched coat-sleeve as if it were a telescope
with the stopper on, and I hate him with an
unwholesome hatred for two hours [30].

Dickens made numerous references to evangelicals in his novels and published writings, and a full survey of them would be beyond the scope of this work. In the preface to Pickwick Papers (1836–7) Dickens outlined his

principles in dealing with religion in his work:

Lest there should be any well-intentioned persons who do not perceive the difference (as some could not, When OLD MORTALITY was newly published), between religion and the cant of religion, piety and the pretence of piety, a humble reverence for the great truths of Scripture and an audacious and offensive obstrusion of its letter and not its spirit in the commonest dissensions and meanest affairs of life, to the extraordinary confusion of ignorant minds, let them understand that it is always the latter, and never the former, which is satirized here. Further that the latter is satirized as being, according to all existence, inconsistent with the former, impossible of union with it, and one of the most mischievous falsehoods existent in society — whether it establish its headquarters, for the time being, in Exeter Hall, or Ebenezer Chapel, or both [31].

Dickens did not object to true religion but rather to imposters, wherever they were. In the Pickwick Papers Dickens introduced the Rev Stiggins who was the Dorking Branch Delegate of United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association. He attended a meeting of this obviously evangelical society under the influence of too much pineapple rum, accused various other members of drunkenness, and struck Brother Tadger. After the death of Sam Weller's stepmother Stiggins showed more interest in her

property than grief, and for this he was dealt with by the Wellers [32]. Mr Peckstuff in Martin Chuzzlewit (1843-4) was a man of outward piety and morally upright, but this was a disguise for worldly selfishness and appetites; his daughters were inappropriately named Charity and Mercy. Dombey and Son (1846-8) contained the character of Rev Melchisedech Howler who announced that the end of the world would be two years hence and held meetings in a front room [33]. Later in the novel he had moved to a 'neat whitewashed edifice' where he agreed on the urgent petition of his followers to give the world another two years before it must finally end [34]. Bleak House (1852-3) had several evangelical characters; Mrs Pardiggle, for instance, was a keen philanthropist and missionary who spent much of her time visiting the poor. She was, however, portrayed as a meddling moral intimidator who did nothing for the needy and was not wanted by them [35]. Mrs Pardiggle was an Anglican Evangelical while Mr Chadband was an evangelical with no specific attachment. In Chapter Nineteen he sought to convert the wretched Jo in language which was totally inappropriate to Jo's situation; Mr Chadband's pious facade merely covered a wish to ingratiate himself at Mrs Snagsby's table. All the evangelical figures were portrayed as hypocrites and this was the most common view of the Evangelical Revival in Dickens' writings; the example of Nicodemus Dumps in The Bloomsbury Christening (1838) also illustrated this. He had joined the Society for the Suppression of Vice:

for the pleasure of putting a stop to any harmless
amusements; and he contributed largely
towards the support of two itinerant methodist
parsons, in the amiable hope that if
circumstances rendered any people happy in

this world, they might perchance be rendered
miserable by fears for the next [36].

Dumps also revered the memory of a whist player which was directly contrary to the principles of the Vice Society. Despite the aims of the society this member had joined with very different and less religiously motivated intentions, and it was left to the reader to decide whether this hypocrisy was commonplace in evangelical circles.

The last quotation also illustrated another of Dickens' complaints against evangelicalism. He was concerned by the evangelicals 'putting a stop to any harmless amusements'. In Little Dorrit (1856-7) Dickens described a Sunday evening in London:

Everything was bolted and barred that could
possibly furnish relief to an overworked people.
No pictures, no natural or artificial wonders of
the ancient world — all taboo...
Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets.
Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets...
Nothing for the spent toiler to do but to compare
the monotony of his six days with the monotony
of his seventh [37].

In Little Dorrit Mrs Clennam was an example of the restrictive tendency of evangelicalism. The Murdstones in David Copperfield (1849-50) illustrated the gloomy and austere side of Anglican Evangelicalism. George Silverman's Explanation (1868) contained Brother Verity Hawkyard, Brother Gimlet and other members of their sect; Brother Hawkyard was very self-righteous and frequently repeated that the Lord was aware that he was His best servant and would therefore reward him with what was being

requested. George Silverman worked hard for his college place and fellowship, yet Brother Hawkyard claimed all the credit [38].

Norris F. Pope Jun. argued that the spiritual arrogance, puritanism and the repression of innocent pleasures of the above characters were what Dickens found most objectionable in evangelical behaviour:

The faults of Stiggins, like those of Pecksniff,
Howler, and Chadband, are venal and comic; the
Murdstones, Mrs Clennam, and Verity
Hawkyard are genuinely wicked, vindictive
individuals, morally and psychologically
crippled [39].

Even those to whom Dickens most objected were still portrayed as hypocrites next to those to whom Dickens was not so opposed. For example, Brother Hawkyard's congregation were described thus:

outside their meeting place these brothers and
sisters were no better than the rest of the human
family, but on the whole were, to put the case
mildly, as bad as most, in respect of giving short
weight in their shops, and not speaking the truth
[40].

In the same chapter Dickens accused the evangelicals of conceit, ignorance and restricting God within their own small vision in addition to their hypocrisy.

The charge of hypocrisy among the evangelicals can also be seen in other nineteenth century writers; for example, in 1837 Mrs Frances Trollope (1780–1863) published the Vicar of Wrexhill. The new parson of Wrexhill managed through religious profession and pseudo-sympathy to creep into

the affections of the squire's widow, whom he married for her fortune and property whilst seducing another woman and trying to disinherit his new wife's children by the dead squire. Jane Eyre (1846) introduced Mr Brocklehurst, who was based on Rev William Carus Wilson, headmaster of the school for Clergy Daughters at Cowan Bridge, near Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancashire, which Charlotte Bronte (1816–55), the author had attended. In the novel Brocklehurst oversaw Lowood School, which Jane Eyre attended. On his visit to the school in Chapter Seven of Jane Eyre he was at pains to save money in the laundry by making the children wear clothes which were long worn out and not frequently cleaned. He did nothing to alleviate the appalling conditions under which the girls were forced to live; on discovering that the breakfast was inedible on one occasion and that a lunch superior to that proscribed had been served on another, Brocklehurst explained to Miss Temple that the children would have been better served by an address on the sufferings of Christ and the primitive Christians than by food, of which they were in urgent need. Mr Brocklehurst, however, was well fed and clothed and the dress of his wife and children was positively ostentatious:

they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk and furs. The younger of the trio had grey beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes, and from under the brim of this graceful head-dress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled; the elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls [41].

The entrance of these women cut short a lecture by Mr Brocklehurst to the

mistresses and schoolgirls in which they were told:

my mission is to mortify in these girls the lust of
the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with
shamefulness and sobriety, not with braided
hair and costly apparel [42].

In Chapter Nine the school was struck down by typhus and Mr Brocklehurst and his family's visits to the school ceased, as did the careful scrutiny of the accounts. Both Mr Brocklehurst and the Vicar of Wrexhill were meant to portray the evangelicals as hypocrites and their philanthropy as self centred and hypocritical. Anthony Trollope's (1815–1882) Obadiah Slope in Barchester Towers (1857) was in same mould as his mother's Vicar of Wrexhill in pretending great piety to the bishop while truly seeking worldly advancement.

Nineteenth century novelists also joined Dickens in seeing the Evangelical Revival as restrictive. In The Newcomes (1854) William Makepeace Thackeray satirized Clapham society and the Evangelical's residences in Clapham:

As you entered the gate, gravity fell on you; and
decorum wrapped you in a garment of starch.
The butcher-boy who galloped his horse and cart
madly about the adjoining lanes and common,
whistled wild melodies and joked with a
hundred cook-maids, on passing that lodge fell
into an undertaker's pace, and delivered his
joints and sweetbreads silently at the servants'
entrance. The rooks in the elms cawed sermons
at the morning and evening; the peacocks

walked demurely on the terraces; the
guinea-fowls looked more quaker-like than
those savoury birds usually do [43].

Mrs Gaskell's (1810-1865) novels contained several evangelically narrow characters. The Gibson's cook in Sylvia's Lovers (1863) was a Methodist who refused to cook French recipes because they were unscriptural. Jonas Barclay in Wives and Daughters (1866) was a Methodist minister who turned his flock from pleasures of the world because, though they looked appetising, they would give no pleasure [44]. In Samuel Butler's (1835-1902) The Way of All Flesh (1903) traffic on the toy railway was not permitted on the Sabbath in the evangelical Pontifex household even when the children promised to run only Sunday trains on it [45].

This novel points to a methodological problem which has been found in examining nineteenth century literary views of the Evangelical Revival. Those writing after the 1830's were surrounded by men of evangelical beliefs who were successors to the earlier evangelicals but had differences from their predecessors. Many of the books written after 1830 would have referred to the evangelicals of the earlier period as the experiences which were drawn upon in the production of the novel related to an earlier age. The Evangelical background of the Bronte sisters can be used to explain references to the Evangelical Revival in their work [46], but Samuel Butler was not born until 1835 and his work, however carefully researched must have reflected the evangelicals later in the nineteenth century. For this reason references in this chapter have generally been confined to the earlier part of the century and have been used against each other in an attempt to provide a broad consensus. It was, of course, possible that many of the views of later evangelicals were equally applicable to those of the eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries as well as later in the latter century.

The nineteenth century novels of Dickens and others levelled two prime charges against the evangelicals — those of hypocrisy and narrowness of outlook. Drama depicted evangelicals along similar lines. Rosa Fielding. Or. A Victim of Lust (1876) drew heavily on the writings of Dickens. Its basic aim was to portray the evangelicals as men who laid claim to religious principles but were, instead, sexually wild drunkards. The Reverend Brother Stiggins, for example, was accused of an immoral act with a young sow and Mr Bonham, the evangelical elder, raised money for some missionaries so that they could be:

supplied with special pants for the female
natives: so that their 'bare bottoms' should not be
displayed 'to the unhallowed gaze of the
unregenerate sailors of whale ships', but
reserved for the private pleasure of our
'self-sacrificing brethren, the missionaries'
[47].

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to show that not all nineteenth century writers were opposed to the Evangelical Revival. George Eliot was the pen-name of Marian Evans (1819–1880). She was educated at Nuneaton School, an Evangelical establishment where she boarded from 1828–32, and she remained under Evangelical influences until at least 1841. In later life, however, she was an atheist. George Eliot was widely acquainted with Methodism through her aunt and uncle who were originally Wesleyan Methodists but became Primitive Methodists after the Wesleyans banned women preachers in 1803. George Eliot was also acquainted with Baptists and Congregationalists [48].

In the 1857 Scenes from Clerical Life she presented the poverty-stricken and saintly Amos Barton and Edgar Tryan. These two were Evangelical clergymen who received sympathetic portrayals. The Sad Fortunes of the Rev Amos Barton presented a curate without tact, learning or charm who was unpopular with his parishioners. During the story he slowly earned their affection through his lifestyle and in sympathy for the death of his beautiful and gentle wife, Milly. In Janet's Repentance the Rev Edgar Tryan, an earnest Evangelical clergyman, came to Milby and tried to raise this industrial town from its religious apathy. To this end he introduced a religious lending library to his area of the parish, expounded the scriptures in cottages, and started evening lectures in the parish church. This last action caused great resentment in the district and a large and noisy procession left the local hostelry with placards objecting to cant, to protest at the lectures on their first night. In the speech of Mr Dempster, the drunken local lawyer, Eliot outlined the standard opposition to the Evangelicals, but her sympathy did not lie here and Tryan was successful in establishing his evening lectures. In this story Eliot echoed the experiences of John Venn at Clapham and Charles Simeon at Cambridge in establishing their ministries. There was also a sub-plot concerning Dempster's long-suffering wife Janet. Her husband's abuse forced Janet to turn to drink. She shared her husband's prejudice against the methodistical innovator, until she discovered in him a sympathetic fellow-sufferer of Dempster's anger. Her husband's ill treatment culminated in an act of gross brutality which led her to appeal to Tryan for help, and under his guidance she fought her drink problem. Dempster died after falling from his gig, and Janet slowly achieved control of her troubles. The story closed with the death of Tryan from consumption which left Janet bereaved but

strengthened for a life of service.

In 1859 Eliot presented a favourable picture of Methodism in Adam Bede. Hetty was in prison condemned to death for infanticide, where she was comforted by her cousin Dinah Morris. Dinah was a Methodist whose strong, serious and calm nature was contrasted with Hetty's throughout the novel. This work showed traces of Southey's Life of Wesley, Mrs Fletcher's Life and the experiences of George Eliot's aunt [49]. Eliot tried to present a true picture of the Evangelical Revival and did not rely on traditional literary views of the phenomenon. Adam Bede showed the care bestowed on the research by George Eliot in its portrayal of the Methodist approach to condemned criminals in Dinah's work with Hetty and in its description of Dinah as a female Methodist preacher. However, Eliot ended the novel by throwing out but not ridiculing Methodism in favour of her Feuerbachian atheism.

Felix Holt, the Radical followed in 1866 but this novel was set in 1832 and subsequent years and showed evangelicals of a later era than this work includes. Middlemarch (1872) was set in the years immediately preceding the Reform Act of 1832. It presented an out-and-out hypocrite in the mayor's brother-in-law, the banker Bulstrode, who accommodated his evangelical belief to accept dishonest trading, deception and robbery. These later novels showed Eliot's continuing movement away from her youthful evangelicalism but that she still retained an openness towards it. Bulstrode was a hypocrite who went so far as to engineer Raffles death but was not a caricature. Eliot showed that Bulstrode and all her other evangelical characters were fully human and subjected to the same temptations as other men. She did not follow the characteristic approach to the evangelicals, seen in other nineteenth century novels, but sought to examine them openly

from original research.

It has been shown that the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was largely opposed to the Evangelical Revival. The main accusation which can be seen throughout the period from Fielding's Amelia (1751) to Dicken's George Silverman's Explanation of 1868 was that the evangelicals were hypocrites. The plays and poems of the 1760's were particularly vehement in advancing this charge against Methodism. A second outburst of these sentiments occurred when the children who had received a strict Evangelical upbringing in the early years of the nineteenth century started to publish and vented their feelings concerning their childhood experiences. The earlier outburst, however, is harder to explain. It is possible that the relative stability of the 1760's allowed a growth in drama and poetry and that the writers who participated in this reflected the prejudices which had been prevalent in their formative years. Many of those who attacked Methodism in the sixties had grown up in a climate of anti-Methodist feeling, the exception to this being Foote the first and most prolific of the writers considered. It is also possible that Whitefield's sermon against attending theatres provoked this opposition. Either way, the opposition provoked attacks on Foote for The Minor, but also support, as this was Foote's most successful play and the other anti-Methodist works were not unsuccessful.

Overall, the opposition to evangelical beliefs did not decline as time passed. Dickens' opposition was just as deep seated as Foote's but referred to evangelicals of a later period. Barnaby Rudge (1841) was set at the time of the Gordon Riots in 1780 but did not parody evangelical belief but, rather, Protestant intransigence. Dickens made few references to Methodism, as opposed to Evangelicalism, and these related to the nineteenth and not the

eighteenth century. The literature which referred to the Evangelical Revival rarely referred to situations which had not occurred in the author's lifetime. The only exception to this was Adam Bede which was set in a period before George Eliot's birth and anchored in that era by careful research. The writers considered used their work to express their own personal cases against the examples of evangelical religion which they had either encountered in their childhood or were surrounded by at the time of writing. The only author who did not express her own opinions on evangelical belief was George Eliot and she was a remarkable anomaly.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Pope – Dunciad Book II verse 253 ff
2. Fielding – Joseph Andrews Ch XVII
3. Swallow – Methodism in the light of the English Literature of the last century (hereafter Methodism) p42. The early part of this chapter is greatly indebted to this work.
4. Richardson – History of Sir Charles Grandison Vol V Letter XI
(Swallow – Methodism p139)
5. Swallow – Methodism p142–4
6. Tyerman – Life of Whitefield Vol II p423
7. Letter 20/12/1764 (Swallow – Methodism p17)
8. To play with the sacred
9. Swallow – Methodism pp23–4
10. An obvious parody on Whitefield who had a squint.
11. Swallow – Methodism p23
12. For the numbers in this controversy see Chapter 2
13. Tyerman – Life of Whitefield Vol II p438
14. Swallow – Methodism pp31–2
15. See Chapter 2
16. Swallow – Methodism p47
17. Swallow – Methodism pp48–9; Tyerman – Life of Wesley Vol II p592
18. Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature Vol II pp512–3
19. Swallow – Methodism p52
20. Swallow – Methodism pp53–4
21. Swallow – Methodism p54
22. Eg Foote – The Mayor of Garratt (1763), Chatterton in the poem from

his Journal see Swallow – Methodism pp26,52

23. Eg Dr Nathaniel Lancaster
24. Smollett – History of England p579
25. Swallow – Methodism pp150–1
26. Swallow – Methodism p149
27. Gill – The Romantic Movement and Methodism (1937) p120
28. Swallow – Methodism p60
29. Swallow – Methodism p62
30. Dickens – The Uncommercial Traveller Chapter IX
31. Dickens – The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club Preface
32. Dickens – Pickwick Papers Chapters 23, 52
33. Dickens – Dombey and Son Chapter 15
34. Dickens – Dombey and Son Chapter 60
35. Dickens – Bleak House Chapter 60
36. Dickens – The Bloomsbury Christening (Chapter XI of the Tales) in Sketches by Boz
37. Dickens – Little Dorrit Chapter 3
38. Dickens – George Silverman's Explanation Chapter 6
39. Pope – "Charitable activity and attitudes in early Victorian England, with special reference to Dickens and the Evangelicals" – unpublished Ox.D.Phil 1975 p62. This work was extensively used to underpin the work on Dickens.
40. Dickens – George Silverman's Explanation Chapter 6
41. Charlotte Bronte – Jane Eyre Chapter 7
42. Charlotte Bronte – Jane Eyre Chapter 7
43. Thackeray – The Newcomes Chapter 2 quoted in Bradley – The Call to Seriousness pp26–7

44. See Cunningham – Everywhere Soken Against (1975) p139
45. See Bradley – The Call to Seriousness p183
46. See Cunningham – Everywhere Spoken Against Chapter 5
47. Cunningham – Everywhere Spoken Against p228
48. Cunningham – Everywhere Spoken Against p146
49. Cunningham – Everywhere Spoken Against pp147–52

Chapter Eight

The Twentieth Century

This chapter surveys the attitudes of the twentieth century writers to the Evangelical Revival. It starts by examining the various dates which these writers saw as the opening of the Evangelical Revival and their reasoning behind such choices. Frank Baker in John Wesley and the Church of England (1970) argued that the Revival started in the seventeenth century. When Methodism started in 1739 it joined in a wave of spiritual renewal which had probably begun with the Pietist Movement in Germany [1], and spread to both the British Isles and America. Revivals in Wales and Cornwall had already been in progress for several years before Methodism burst forth. Baker stressed the continuity of Methodism with these early movements and illustrated this by pointing out that the much heralded move to open air preaching had been preceded by the Rev William Morgan in Bristol in the previous year [2]. It should also be remembered that itinerant field preaching had been seen at various points in the previous century [3].

Watts, in his work on The Dissenters (1978), noticed three revivals of religion preceding Methodism. These were the revivals in Wales, the Moravians at Berthelsdorf in Saxony, and that which was started by Theodorus Frelinghuysen in New Jersey in 1719 and was followed by Tennent in New Brunswick in 1726. Watts argued that the religious soul of England was ripe for revival. In the 1690's several Anglicans had become worried by the growing irreligion among the poor and had founded various societies to combat this [4]. This fertile ground bore fruit in the bringing together of the three revivals spread round the world through the medium of

a group of Oxford graduates and students meeting from 1729 onwards. This idea of the Methodists bringing together a large number of strands in a new combination potently suited for its generation is also found in the essay of J.D. Walsh on the "Origins of the Evangelical Revival" (1966). Walsh concentrated on various strands within English religion which influenced Methodism, though he did mention the Moravians in England. The Revival was seen to come from the tradition of High Church piety in which Wesley himself started, from a reaction to the full-blown rationalism of the eighteenth century and as a re-emergence within the Church of England of seventeenth century Puritanism, which the instigator imbibed from his mother. Neither Walsh nor Watts pointed to a specific date as the beginning of the Revival; instead, it was seen to appear from a gradual coalescing of various forces in the ferment of the Holy Club in Oxford, and most especially in the minds of John Wesley and George Whitefield [5].

F.W.B. Bullock in his Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696-1845 (1959) stressed that the revival of the eighteenth century was only part of an evangelical movement which dated from the first century of the Christian era. This revival was greatly accelerated and advanced by the evangelical conversion of Whitefield in 1735 and of the two Wesley's in 1738, but did not originate in these events. Instead, men such as Harris, Rowlands and Grimshaw underwent evangelical conversions quite independently of Whitefield and the Wesleys. Bullock pointed to the group of religious persons around Rochdale with whom Grimshaw associated in 1731 as proof that the way was being prepared long in advance of 1735 and 1738 for the revival in which the Wesleys and Whitefield would play so prominent a part [6].

Some twentieth century writers on the Evangelical Revival were,

however prepared to see the Revival as starting from a particular event. Sykes pointed to a letter written by John Wesley on 22 November 1725 in which he wrote:

saving faith (including practice) is an asset to
what God has revealed because He has revealed
it, and not because the truth of it may be evinced
by reason [7].

It is argued that this letter illustrates that Wesley 'had crossed the Rubicon' from the Latitudinarianism then prevalent to the position from which the Evangelical Revival sprang. The conversion of George Whitefield was seen as the starting point of the Revival by J.S. Reynolds [8], but Whiteley argued that, rather, the conversion of John Wesley on 24 May 1738 in Aldersgate at 9.15 pm was the moment at which the Evangelical Revival started [9].

Elie Halevy presented a thesis which has been highly influential and controversial in the twentieth century. It was presented in La naissance du methodisme en Angleterre or The Birth of Methodism in England which first appeared in the Revue de Paris in 1906 and in A History of the English People in 1815 which was published six years later. He dated the Evangelical Revival to the move to field-preaching in 1739 [10], and tried to see the roots of this movement in British society. For Halevy the industrial era in England had started in 1688. This was more usually dated from late in the eighteenth century but he argued that the great inventions which this later date signified were, in fact, dependent on a long period of prior development which had started as society settled at the Revolution. By the late 1730's overproduction had led to an economic crisis in England, and this economic tension was heightened by poor harvests in 1738 and 1739. Halevy also pointed to a political crisis at this time because the peace which Walpole had

previously supported became no longer tenable as Britain moved to the position of leading mercantile country, workshop, market and commercial depot of the world, and he was forced to declare war on both France and Spain [11].

Onto this stage of economic and political disquiet Methodism arrived and Halevy stressed the links between the Evangelical Revival and the social, political and economic world around it:

Just at the time when the religious revolution led by Wesley and Whitefield was beginning, a political revolution was underway in England.

The simultaneous character of the two events is not, nor could it be, a pure coincidence; it seems that one must be the effect of the other, or both the effect of an identical cause [12].

Observe, indeed, the times and the places at which the industrial crisis raged; note where the religious crisis burst forth, the evidence demonstrates that the two crises are tied together [13].

Halevy did not deny that there were some religious causes to the Revival, suggesting that the Welsh movement and the Moravians were important spurs to the Revival alongside the economic, social and political factors [14].

Halevy's dating of the Industrial Era as starting in 1688 did not agree with most views of its chronology. Peter Mathias in The First Industrial Nation (1969) stated that the period between 1740 and 1780 saw a break with the previous tradition of English economic life and a quickening of its rate of growth. He objected to the use of the term 'Revolution' to describe the change

in the economic welfare of England because it implied a rapid change in a short space of time which did not occur in England. The 1750's and 1760's saw the onset of industrial innovation in several key industries [15], and this has been taken to equate with Prof. W.W. Rostow's "take-off into self-sustained growth" [16] which has been taken as an index for the start of an Industrial Revolution. Mathias stated that this 'take-off' probably occurred in England at the end of the American War of Independence in 1783, when there was a steep rise in foreign trade values. This is almost a century after Halevy said that industrialization occurred. Mathias did, however, point to a commercial revolution between 1650 and 1750 which led to the availability of large markets for English products even if the industrialization necessary to take full advantage of these markets did not occur until the later part of the eighteenth century. Finally Mathias' review did not see the years of 1738 and 1739 as economically crucial [17].

Some twentieth century writers on the Evangelical Revival saw it as starting after 1739. Muriel Jaeger in Before Victoria (1956) accepted that Wesley's preaching had provoked large scale conversion in the lowest orders of English society; indeed, religious zeal had not disappeared since the time of Cromwell but instead was out of fashion among the upper classes. The middle classes followed their lead, so most men quietly conformed to the National Church. Thus, at the time of Wilberforce's conversion in 1785 Wesley, the Countess of Huntingdon and others were proclaiming an evangelical religion but were able to accomplish little because they were neither a large enough nor a strong enough party. With the conversion of Wilberforce and Hannah More, however, all this changed:

Their recruitment gave a lift to a number of comparatively obscure workers for religious and

moral reform. Methodism, with its evangelical reaction in the Church, was a movement coming from below, and the earlier converts, except for a few recognised eccentrics [18], were not of the classes that set the tone of Society. But henceforth these underminers had their active agents in the political and the fashionable world and among the intellectuals. The gain in prestige was enormous [19].

Jaeger saw the work of Wesley and the Methodists as only becoming important in the late 1780's with the assistance of Wilberforce and More. The Royal Proclamation of 1787 was seen as giving important prestige to evangelical religion which had been ineffectually propagated before that time. The successes of More and Wilberforce were, however, built on this antecedent work.

Ford K. Brown moved further away from 1739 as the starting point for the Evangelical Revival. He argued that the term 'Evangelical Revival' obscured rather than shed light [20], lumping together the Methodists and the Evangelicals in a single umbrella term which ignored the nature and accomplishments of the Evangelical movement of Wilberforce and the laymen around him. The work of Wesley had been an honourable but nevertheless complete failure; it had succeeded in quickening the spiritual life of the nation but the religious situation in the later eighteenth century was conclusive proof that his work had accomplished little or nothing. Brown contended that this was because Wesley had appealed to the wrong people. If national reform was to be accomplished it was necessary to start at the top of the social ladder and work downwards, but Wesley had gone chiefly

to the poor:

At the end of the century they [the Evangelicals] had directly before them not only the inspiring example of two great religious reformers but their giant errors. It would have been hard to overlook these errors and fantastic, in any sensible person, to repeat them. That the Evangelicals did neither made the difference between complete failure as a more gentlemanly continuation of the Wesleyan Revival and the success they won — qualified as it was, great nevertheless [21].

Brown argued that from 1780 onwards there was a movement for national reform in England. This movement learned the lessons of the Wesleyan revival and actively strove to enlist the great in the cause. It was greatly helped in this by both the conversion of William Wilberforce from nominal Christianity to practical Christianity in 1785 and the foundation of the first of many Evangelical reforming institutions in 1788 [22]. These events launched the permanent revival of English religion dating from the eighteenth century and not the honourable but flawed Wesleyan Movement which started in 1739 [23].

Brown stated that most of the early clerical leaders of this revival had been greatly influenced by Whitefield and, to a lesser extent, by Wesley; indeed, some had been closely associated with the Methodists [24]. However, the later clerics and laymen had no wish to be associated with the Methodists; they explicitly stated that they were not Methodists [25], had developed independently of that movement, and had no wish to be confused

with it. Maldwyn Edwards agreed that there was no sort of alliance between Wilberforce and the other Evangelicals and the Methodists of their day. This was illustrated by a quotation from Hannah More on one of her Sunday teachers, Sergeant Hill:

whom we thought at first to be a Methodist, but
we find him so good a soldier and so correct in
his morals, that we do not trouble ourselves
about his religion [26].

In reference to the middle of the eighteenth century Edwards placed the Evangelical clergy in two categories. Those who, like Grimshaw of Haworth, Perronet of Shoreham and Fletcher, actively associated themselves with the development of Wesley's work, and those men who were satisfied to remain friends and correspondents, but no more, men such as Walker of Truro, Henry Venn, Berridge of Everton and Romaine. He argued that the progenitors of the Revival were those who fell in this second category; those who shared Wesley's spirit but distrusted his methods [27].

Studies [28] in the dates at which various evangelical clergymen came to hold evangelical opinions have shown that the first Evangelicals were converted independently from Wesley and Whitefield and that, among later Evangelicals, some were converted by Methodist influence [29] and others independently [30]. No work has concluded differently from this but several have argued that the Evangelicals were dependent on the Methodist movement. E.R. Taylor wrote:

Wesley was driven out of the Church of England,
but many of his closest fellow-workers, men
such as Venn and Grimshaw, remained in that
Church. Their example served to inspire the

new party, which, through Simeon and others, gave to Anglicanism a renewed zeal. Laymen too, such as Wilberforce and Ashley, and the Clapham sect, wielded immense influence [31].

Elie Halevy also suggested that the Evangelical Movement was a 'species of Anglican Methodism' which had been left behind in the Established Church when Wesley and the Methodists had been driven from it. An evangelical impulse remained within the Church in the ministries of a number of clergymen who worked alongside Wesley and welcomed him to their parishes. As these aged and died their successors organised themselves into a party with centres at Cambridge and Clapham. Thus the regeneration of the Church which Wesley had sought was accomplished by the followers and successors of various clergymen such as Walker, Hervey, Grimshaw, Newton, Venn, and Romaine, all of whom Halevy designated disciples of Wesley [32].

Bernard Semmel argued that the two parties developed independently but became fused in one movement for 'vital' religion. He saw the Evangelicals as successors to the heritage of Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon in their espousal of Calvinism, whilst Wesley and his followers were Arminians. These differences became less marked in the years around the turn of the eighteenth century, and this was seen in a softening of the Calvinism of the Evangelicals. The Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, published by the Calvinist William Wilberforce in 1797, was seen by Semmel as a manifesto for 'vital' religion to which an Arminian could take no exception. The two movements which had started differently became indistinguishable:

Practically speaking, then, Arminian

Wesleyanism and Calvinistic Evangelicalism spoke, and were understood to speak, essentially the same language. Doctrinal differences of importance there had been and might continue to be, but in the generations following Wesley's death a practical Christianity developed which made it possible for a writer inquiring into the moral tendency of both Methodism and Evangelicalism to say that "Calvinist, Methodist, and Evangelical, are to be considered synonymous", while adding that "although there is a difference between them in some respects, yet the great lines of their character are the same" [33].

Semmel argued that, far from being, as Brown suggested, two distinctly different parties who explicitly had no wish to be confused with each other, the Methodists and the Evangelicals became a closely allied, if not synonymous, front which worked to revive traditional religion in England. This is seen as the English contribution to a democratic revolution which brought the long-suppressed, inarticulate lower classes to a more important position in several countries between 1760 and 1815 [34]. The message which Wesley preached, which was later taken up by the Evangelicals as well:

bore the revolutionary message of liberty and equality — of free will and universal salvation — in the shape best able to appeal to the masses of men who aspired to personal autonomy but who were still rooted in a strong dependence, a deep

internal attachment to traditional values [35].

Semmel saw the Evangelical Revival as a progressive and liberal movement; some writers have, however, seen it as promoting a regressive and repressive religion.

J.L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond produced works on The Town Labourer 1760–1832 (1920) and The Village Labourer 1760–1832 (1920) in the first quarter of the twentieth century. These works concentrated on those classes among which Methodism was most successful. To these people the Established Church had very little to say; it preached a religion of manners which taught its adherents to admire a world made, and, more particularly, ordered, by a Providence of good taste and discreet comfort, and so was a religion of the upper class and of no use to the working class man for whom the world did not explain itself and was full of injustice. Such men looked to religion for an escape from their situation and an assurance that their life had some significance despite the contrary view that the world around them gave [36].

Methodism was a religion which supplied everything that this sector of the population required. In the Established Church these men were confronted by sermons on the subordination of the lower classes and the natural ordering of society, but in chapels they could participate more fully in the worship and might even rise to a position of some importance:

The men and women who were drawn into the brisk, alert, and ardent life of the new religion found plenty to occupy their minds and to stimulate faculties and interests that were otherwise left neglected [37].

The message of Methodism was as well suited as its structure to the

needs of the working classes. It told them that they carried their own fate and that the greatest happiness could be attained by any and all men, so that the greater the sufferings endured with patience during life, the greater the final reward [38].

The main question to which the Hammonds addressed themselves was that of the effect of this religion on the working classes. They noted that terms of condemnation without any specific reference were readily bandied about, but argued that closer examination showed that these were applied to Baptists or Presbyterians whilst it was generally accepted that the Methodists were peaceful people. For this reason the leading working class reformers regarded the Methodists as most definite enemies to the cause of the working class. An example of this is given in William Cobbett's 1824 comment that the Methodists were "the bitterest foes of freedom in England" [39]. The Hammonds saw the content of the Methodist movement as unfavourable to any movement towards democracy and the trade union spirit because:

It diverted energy from the class struggle at a time when wise energy was scarce, and money when money was still scarcer [40].

The Hammonds reserved their bitterest condemnation for the Evangelicals. William Wilberforce and Hannah More received the greatest criticism for promoting philanthropy among the rich and a religion which only reinforced submission and resignation among the poor. More's Mendip Annals described the appalling conditions of the poor but were attacked by the Hammonds for making no comment on why this was so, whilst Wilberforce's support for the Combination Acts, the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and laws for the stricter observance of Sunday were all seen as

working in a direction totally opposed to the good of the lowest classes [41]. This enforcement of the observance of Sunday through the medium of the Society for the Reformation of Manners was seen to work directly against the poor because it prevented many leisure activities and freedom of speech among them, but did not try to limit the lifestyles of the rich [42].

The Evangelical Revival was seen by the Hammonds as a vehicle for the imposition of moral reform which would keep the lower orders in check. The theology of the Revival, when mentioned, was only seen in the way it bolstered the political intention of suppressing the working class masses [43]. The Hammonds also argued that the life and energy and, most especially, the education which the Revival gave to the common man may have, against all intentions, "made men better citizens, and some better rebels" [44].

Wearmouth, a devoted Methodist, agreed that Methodism provided what the lower classes required. It gave them something to do which they felt they had a share in, and a responsibility for. It not only emphasised the importance of the individual but it also led to a unity of class. The working man was attracted by the idea of a personal sense of responsibility and was retained by the collective and democratic possibilities which this evangelical religion offered. Wearmouth did, however, admit that the Methodist leadership did not wish to offer the working classes an outlet for such ideas:

Although Methodism always remained a religious movement, its influence could not be confined to the narrow limits created by its leading preachers. It went beyond the artificial restrictions and filtered to the industrial and political activities of its members. When no other example of collective endeavour presented itself

to the working classes, Methodism became a pattern and parent for their democratic exercises and idealism [45].

For Wearmouth the emphasis of the Evangelical Revival on a duty to be done here and now and the idea that society had a natural order in which all should bear their position without complaint was not a negative message for the working classes. Rather, it awoke a social conscience which led to a philanthropy whose natural consequence was social, political and economic reforms which were to improve the lot of the common man [46].

Thus Wearmouth argued that the content of the Evangelical Revival provided a way forward for the common man as it led to social, political and economic reforms and pointed the way for him to combine in associations to improve his conditions and lifestyle.

- E.P. Thompson tied the content of the Evangelical Revival closely to the idea of factory discipline. He saw it as having both a stabilising and a regressive influence on society. He highlighted the employer's problem during the Industrial Revolution as one of discipline — so that the labourer paid attention to instructions, fulfilled contracts on time and did not embezzle materials. To achieve this the employers paid the lowest possible wages to ensure that the workers trod the line, otherwise they would not survive. Thompson argued that the Methodist reinforcement of the conventional teaching of the blessedness of poverty did not challenge this doctrine but provided the inner compulsion for the working classes to accept such a regressive and stabilising influence [47]. The strength of the Revival lay in its assertion that even the simplest and least educated could attain grace. Thompson saw the content of Methodism as insidious because once this grace had been attained it could be lost, so that the members of the

Revival had to work to retain such grace or they would be cast out of the society into an industrial wilderness and what was seen as eternal lurid punishment. The compunction to stay in a state of grace was strong [48].

Three means of maintaining grace were outlined. The first was service to the society as a leader, preacher or in some other capacity. The second was through a cultivation of the soul which was most satisfactorily accomplished in attempts to reproduce the emotional convulsions and excesses of conversion. The third, and for Thompson the most insidious, means was the reproduction of methodical discipline in every corner of life, but most especially in labour. This was to be undertaken as a pure act of virtue. These three mechanisms combined perfectly to give a submissive workforce, without any compulsion to change its lot but a desire to suffer it as though this suffering was a positive virtue:

Energies and emotions which were dangerous to social order, or which were merely unproductive were released in the harmless form of sporadic love-feasts, watch-nights, band meetings or revivalist campaigns... These Sabbath orgasms of feeling made more possible the single-minded weekday direction of these energies to the consummation of productive labour. Moreover, since salvation was never assured, and temptations lurked on every side, there was a constant inner goading to 'sober and industrious' behaviour [49].

Methodism turned the worker into his own slave driver. It gave the labouring classes those doctrines of obedience and discipline which the

Established Church had been trying to inculcate for centuries, in a very short time. Why then was this movement so successful among the lowest orders when it only served to prolong their suppression indefinitely?

Methodism, with its open chapel doors, did offer to the uprooted and abandoned people of the Industrial Revolution some kind of community to replace the older community patterns which were being displaced. As an unestimated (although undemocratic) church, there was a sense in which working people could make it their own; and the more closely knit the community in which Methodism took root the more this was so [50].

The attraction of Methodism for the working classes was that it gave them a place in an otherwise hostile world. A second reason for the success among the working classes between 1790 and 1830 was direct indoctrination. Thompson saw an Evangelical Revival in the Established Church, Dissent and the halfway house of Methodism, which was promoting the submissive doctrines of Wesley but by the nineteenth century in a far less honourable fashion [51]. These three forces were acting in the same direction and the Sunday school was one of the most powerful indoctrinating tools. Thompson argued that these were highly regressive. The village dame schools of the eighteenth century had provided an education for the poor, if only in the names of the flowers and herbs, while the Sunday schools of the Revival sought only the 'moral rescue' of the poor and not a worthwhile education [52]. He did, however argue that though this was the declared intention of the hierarchy its implementation at grass roots level may have provided

some education.

The interpretations of the content of the Evangelical Revival recently outlined have concentrated on its sociological aspects. Previously it had been shown that Semmel stressed the religious nature of the content of the movement. Davies argued that Wesley was primarily a theologian throughout his evangelical mission and that the theology of Methodism, which was biblically based, stood predominant in the movement [53]. Other writers have argued that the content of the movement was essentially working for a reformation of manners [54]. E.R. Norman saw the Evangelical Revival as a movement keen to place social morality on Christian foundations [55].

Having surveyed the varying interpretations of the content of the Evangelical Revival it is necessary to examine the views of twentieth century writers on the results of the movement. The most discussed view in this sphere has been that of Halevy. He stated that the Methodist Revival had prevented the French Revolution having a counterpart in England. He pointed out that England was in turmoil in 1739. The proletariat or working classes were led by the bourgeoisie or middle classes. The situation was rife for political revolution to develop if the bourgeoisie had wished to lead the proletariat in that direction. But Halevy argued that the bourgeoisie wished to lead the proletariat in a conservative and religious direction and Methodism supplied the means:

The church they established was at once the most conservative in the political opinions of its members, and the most hierarchical in its internal organisation, for all the Protestant sects. This is how Methodism bent the popular

impulses of 1739 to the form which most favoured the respect for and maintenance of existing institutions [56].

It has been shown that the Hammonds argued that the Evangelical Revival was an instrument designed to reinforce resignation and submission in the lowest classes. It was unfavourable to working class movements and did help to prevent a revolution occurring in Britain.

E.J. Hobsbawm argued that other factors prevented revolution in England and that if these factors had not been present the influence of Methodism would not have been great enough to avert revolution anyway. He pointed to Lenin's idea that revolution, to be successful, needed a crisis in the affairs of the ruling order and a body of revolutionaries capable of leading and directing the dissatisfied labour force and concluded that neither of these two factors were present in England at the time [57]. He noted that Wesley and the other Methodist leaders were vigorously opposed to revolution. But he argued that this was not so true of much of the rank and file of the movement who did not avoid being drawn into many of the agitations of the early nineteenth century. He cited the Primitive Methodists as an example of this. This offshoot of Wesleyanism was far more politically orientated than its parent and was one of the radical sects to which Wesleyan Methodism lost ground in the period of maximum social discontent and rapid industrialisation which Hobsbawm highlighted as occurring between 1815 and 1848. It is seen as contributing to the labour movement while Wesleyanism itself remained conservative : the Wesleyan leadership even denied its own Tolpuddle martyrs. In emphasising the labour sects which appeared from the Wesleyan root Hobsbawm was trying to show that Methodism did become involved in radical political activity in the early

nineteenth century, at least with respect to its rank and file [58].

Hempton agreed that political radicalism was a problem within the Methodist movement in the 1790's but this problem was largely overcome by 1820 [59]. E.R. Taylor pointed to the various breakaways from the Methodist Connexion after Wesley's death in 1791 – the Primitive Methodists, New Connexion Methodists – as conclusive proof that Methodism did not escape the effect of the ideas of the French Revolution, but he argued that the loyalty and numbers of the parent body were sufficient to counterbalance this and act as a positive force to prevent revolution [60].

Hobsbawm, however, argued that Methodism, even in its earliest period when the leaders and members were staunchly anti-revolutionary was not able to prevent revolution because its effects were too localized and its adherents too few in number to have had a significant effect [61]. In examining the relationship between Methodism and revolutionary politics he complained that it had been assumed that people had turned to Methodism as an alternative to radical politics when the evidence showed that the two had advanced hand in hand, so that the Methodists recruited most rapidly when things were not economically at their worst but general agitation was rising [62].

E.P. Thompson was undecided as to whether Methodism prevented revolution in England [63]. In examining the relationship between Methodism and Revolutionary politics he took a different view of the evidence from Hobsbawm. He suggested that religious revivalism took over just at the point where political and temporal aspirations met defeat. The oppressed people who had aspired to political change turned in despair to religion. Rather than succeeding in diverting revolution it succeeded when revolution had been averted. Thompson focused on 1797–1800, 1805–7, 1813–18, and

1823-4 as the years of greatest revivalist recruitment [64]. Hobsbawm argued that 1793-5, 1805-16 and especially 1813-16, saw the greatest religious advance [65]. Both saw the numbers pulsating, with declines occurring between these peaks, while a gradual growth was superimposed on these oscillations. A statistical survey of the growth rates of Methodism has shown that high growth rates occurred in 1794-5, 1799, 1804, 1806-8, 1812 and 1814 [66]. The compilers of this survey argued that these figures do not support Thompson's assertions as political fortunes declined before the peak of 1794 as he would expect but did not rise until much later while 1797-8 saw a numerical decline in Methodism. In practice religious and political activity often coincided or at least overlapped in time. When heightened religious activity followed political activity it was only due to the time lag inherent in the time taken for such an external stimulus to manifest itself in religious numbers [67]. This evidence seemed to support Hobsbawm's interpretation of the relationship between radical politics and religion.

To return to the question of Methodism preventing revolution in England, Wearmouth fully supported Halevy's thesis:

The steadiness and loyalty of Methodist people in days of riot and revolution saved England from the calamity that fell upon France. Most authorities acknowledge the truth of that claim and there is no need to enlarge upon it except to say that loyalty was engendered and maintained when the sheer wretchedness of conditions made it an impossible virtue and a strange flower among the depressed poor [68].

J.C.D. Clark agreed that Methodism had inherited the political theology of

the Established Church, with its strict loyalty; indeed he stated that this showed the common parentage of Methodism and Evangelicalism. Both movements strove to emphasise their political orthodoxy. During the French Revolution the Wesleyan support of the monarchy became more urgently relevant but Clark argued that the Wesleyans only preached these doctrines of social subordination and political reverence to a minority while the Anglican clergy had preached the same doctrines to far greater numbers, over a wider area and for a longer period. Thus Clark denied that Methodism had prevented revolution in England, they might have contributed to this but were only reinforcing a larger and longer lasting work [69].

The twentieth century works surveyed in this chapter have shown a wide spectrum over which evangelical religion had an effect. Halevy was aware of revival in the Established Church, the Methodist movement and the various divisions within that movement. He also commented on the effect of evangelical doctrines on the older nonconformist sects in reviving their flagging fortunes and encouraging them to form themselves into local associations [70]. Later writers noted the revival in the Dissenting denominations through the medium of the Evangelical Revival [71]. The latest work in this sphere has shown that the Dissenters were partly revitalised by the agency of the Revival but also partly from inside. Both Watts and Rupp have pointed to various movements of revival within the Dissenting bodies of Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians which came from within, not outside their tradition [72]. Watts pointed to the 'Modern Question' which had opened in 1737 with Matthias Maurice's A Modern question modestly answer'd. This question was whether the unconverted had any duty to believe the gospel and whether the converted

elect had any duty to preach the gospel to the unconverted. Briefly, this question was finally answered by Andrew Fuller's The gospel worthy of all acceptation in 1785, which marked a move in the Dissenting denominations to a more evangelical style of religion from an insular, protectionist one [73]. This change had occurred within the Dissenting denominations and the Baptists in particular. Twentieth century writers not only have seen the role of the Nonconformists in the Evangelical Revival but also in later periods noticed their particular contributions to it.

In conclusion the twentieth century writers saw the Evangelical Revival in many different lights. Hammond and Thompson saw it as a negative and repressive event which insidiously worked to stop the lowest classes helping themselves by catching them in a religious trap. Wearmouth saw it as a positive event which looked forward and helped the lowest classes to a better situation. Brown saw the term itself as redundant and inhibiting to a true understanding of events.

Some trends can, however, be seen in the twentieth century historiography of the Revival. Firstly, it has been seen as a dynamic movement. Baker saw it as part of a growing movement of worldwide renewal. Thompson and Hobsbawm disputed over its exact relations with the growth of political aspirations. Taylor and Hempton discussed its changing political viewpoints. Hempton stated that the problem in a study of the phenomenon was that Methodism was not a static entity but changed throughout the century:

there were many Methodisms in many places at
many times [74].

Such an attitude can be spread to cover the whole Evangelical Revival as seen in the writers of the twentieth century.

A second and more important common feature of the twentieth century writing has been its attempt to examine what the Evangelical Revival contributed to and took from the society around it. Professor Ward in examining "The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church, 1780-1830" suggested that a change in Baptist fortunes:

arose from a transformation of the church partly effected, and partly evoked, by the transformation of the context in which it operated, and that the new frame of mind owed much to the effort to understand that transformed context [75].

Such an attitude is typical of the twentieth century. The religious content of the movement has largely been ignored, as can be seen by the balance of this chapter, the question of the breaking of church regulations by the Methodists has not received the attention in the present century which it had previously received. Instead, starting from the time of Halevy the sociological content and implications of the Evangelical Revival have been widely examined. The prime question of the century's writings has been whether Methodism prevented the French Revolution having a counterpart in England and this is a sociological or political question, not at heart a religious one.

Notes for Chapter Eight

1. P.J. Spener's Pia Desideria of 1675 provided the impetus for this movement. It contained six proposals for restoring true religion.
2. Baker – John Wesley and the Church of England p81
3. Eg Oddie and Holcroft in the Fens in the years following the Great Ejectment of 1662. I would to thank Dr D.W. Lovegrove for bringing this to my attention.
4. Eg SPCK
5. See also Bradley – The Call to Seriousness p15 ff
6. Bullock – Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696–1845 p9
7. Works XXV p188; see also Sykes – Church and State in Eighteenth Century England (1934) p390
8. Reynolds – The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735–1871 : a record of an Unchronicled Movement (1934) p5
9. Whiteley – Wesley's England p376
10. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism p36
11. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism pp62–9
12. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism p62
13. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism p67
14. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism pp58–62
15. Eg cotton, iron, steam power
16. Mathias – The First Industrial Nation (1969) p2
17. For further detail on this paragraph see Matthias – The First Industrial Nation pp1–18
18. The Countess of Huntingdon, Lord Dartmouth, Lord Teignmouth, Sir Harry Trelawney
19. Jaeger – Before Victoria p32

20. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians p526, also Introduction
21. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians p45
22. The Society to effect the enforcement of his Majesty's Proclamation against Vice and Immorality
23. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians – Introduction for a summary of the whole position.
24. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians p51
25. Eg Wilberforce
26. Edwards – After Wesley (1945) p124
27. Edwards – This Methodism (1939) p56
28. Bullock – Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696–1845; J.S. Reynolds – The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735–1871: a record of an unchronicled movement.
29. Eg Toplady
30. Eg Simeon
31. E.R. Taylor – Methodism and Politics 1791–1851 (1935) pp90–91
32. Halevy – A History of the English People in 1815 pp379–81
33. Semmel – The Methodist Revolution p109
34. Semmel – The Methodist Revolution p6
35. Semmel – The Methodist Revolution p8
36. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 pp275–6
37. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p271
38. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p277
39. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p281
40. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p285
41. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 pp226–232
42. Hammond and Hammond – The Village Labourer 1760–1832 p198

43. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p287
44. Hammond and Hammond – The Town Labourer 1760–1832 p287
45. Wearmouth – Methodism and the Working-Class movements of England 1800–1850 p273
46. Wearmouth – Methodism and the common people of the eighteenth century p265
47. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class p358
48. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class p364
49. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class pp368–9
50. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class p379
51. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class pp353–4
52. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class p377
53. Davies – Methodism (1963) p81; also Parkes–Cadman – The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford (1916) p283
54. Brown – Fathers of the Victorians; Himmelfarb – Victorian Minds (1968) p283
55. Norman – Church and Society in England 1770–1970 p38
56. Halevy – The Birth of Methodism in England p76
57. Hobsbawm – “Methodism and the threat of revolution in Britain” from History Today (1957) p116
58. Hobsbawm – Primitive Rebels (1959) pp135–9
59. Hempton – Methodism and Politics in British Society (1984) p227
60. E.R. Taylor – Methodism and Politics 1791–1851 pp16, 32
61. Hobsbawm – Methodism and the threat of revolution in Britain pp122–3
62. Hobsbawm – Primitive Rebels pp129–30
63. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class p381

64. Thompson – The Making of the English Working Class pp388–91
65. Hobsbawm – Primitive Rebels pp129–30
66. Currie, Gilbert, and Horsley – Churches and Churchgoers (1977)
pp40–2
67. Currie, Gilbert, and Horsley – Churches and Churchgoers p108
68. Wearmouth – Methodism and the common people of the 18th century
pp235–42
69. Clark – English Society – 1688–1832 (1985) pp235–42
70. Halevy – A History of the English People in 1815 pp365–70
71. Eg Whiteley – Wesley's England p376; Wearmouth – Methodism and
the common people of the 18th century; Thompson – The Making of the
English Working Class p43
72. Watts – The Dissenters p450–9; Rupp – Religion in England
1688–1791 (1986) pp486–8
73. For a review of this see Nuttall – “Northamptonshire and the modern
Question: A Turning-point in Eighteenth Century Dissent” from Journal of
Theological Studies NS XVI (1965) pp101–123
74. Hempton – Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750–1850 p230
75. Ward – “The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church
1780–1830” – Baptist Quarterly XXV No 4 October 1973 p167

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

This chapter aims to draw together the various strands of the works examined in an attempt to draw some conclusions on the way writers have perceived the Evangelical Revival. The early years of the Revival saw it treated as a religious phenomenon by insiders and outsiders alike. Accusations of a more secular nature were made but these were far outnumbered by those in the spiritual sphere of which enthusiasm was the most common. In the 1770's charges continued to be levelled but by the evangelicals at each other. Externally the movement became more respectable and attacks on it slowly decreased. Internally the Revival splintered and the evangelical Protestants ceased to see each other as united in a single movement. They all still sought to proclaim the gospel, but their ideas of what was to be included in the true gospel were different. These internal divisions were not, however, perceived by those outside the movement who continued to see it as one entity disturbing the religious quiet, though the number of attacks had declined from the 1740's.

The French Revolution saw a radical change in the perception of the Evangelical Revival. The evangelicals claimed, as they had always done, that they were a purely religious movement and that their intentions were spiritual and not temporal. Outsiders accused them of complicity with revolutionary ideas and portrayed the movement as a religious cover for more insidious temporal intentions. As the revolutionary tension abated in the earliest years of nineteenth century these accusations declined as it was realised that the evangelicals were not politically subversive but scrupulously loyal. By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century outsiders had

moved to accuse the evangelicals of a narrow outlook on life. At the same time the width of the Revival was beginning to be seen by those outside it. Both Mant and Smith showed awareness of the varying shades of belief which could be included under the term Methodist and, therefore, within evangelical circles. At this time Evangelicals within the Established Church began to be seen by outsiders as a separate body from the Methodists.

Later in the nineteenth century the children of the Evangelical Revival who had abandoned evangelicalism, whether writing as novelists or in direct accounts, also saw the Revival as a narrow and constricting movement. Those who remained inside the movement and the historians and biographers of the Revival portrayed a static religious movement. These works concentrated on the earlier years of the Revival and saw it continuing in the same format without variation. In focusing on the earlier years of the Revival they also incorporated the perception of the Revival, as a spiritual phenomenon, which had been seen in those early years. The religious questions over the Revival concerning enthusiasm and church order were stressed and not the social and political consequences of the Revival.

The twentieth century writers, however, have focused more closely on the later years of the Revival from the time of the French Revolution. The judgements of earlier writers on the content of the first decades of the Evangelical Revival have been allowed to stand and the Revival in these years accepted as a primarily religious phenomenon. The later years have been examined closely from a sociological perspective by twentieth century writers and the Revival evaluated in social, political and economic terms. The religious aspects of the movement in the later years have been virtually ignored to concentrate on more secular areas. Again this perception of the later years ties in closely with the perceptions of the Revival held in those

years by men outside the Revival itself. Twentieth century writers have examined the impact of the Revival on revolutionary ideas, a topic in which the contemporaries of the Revival were also interested. At the turn of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries the role of the Evangelicals went almost unnoticed in the attempts of the Establishment to bolster itself, but, the twentieth century writers have drawn heavily on these men in many of their sociological analyses. Both Thompson and the Hammonds have been especially critical of Wilberforce, More and the philanthropic societies.

The passing centuries have also seen a gradual widening of the perception of the scope of the movement. In the earliest years writers assumed that the evangelicals were a united party. This unity shattered through several internal disputes. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Mant and Smith perceived various parties within evangelicalism but finally condemned them all together. Later in the same century Overton acknowledged that Dissent had also received a breath of life from the Evangelical Revival but did not elaborate upon this. Elie Halevy continued the widening of perceptions of the Revival by taking greater notice of the contribution of Dissent to the Revival. The twentieth century writers have researched more deeply into this width but this gradual widening of perception can be overstressed. It is a general trend and the writers mentioned above were men whose perceptions were beyond their time. Between 1809 and Overton's work few men saw the Evangelical Revival as anything more than Methodism and the Evangelicals. The general trend, however, has been towards a fuller view of the width of the Evangelical Revival. Alongside the increased width seen in the twentieth century, there has been a growing sense of the diversity inside Methodism. Many of the sociological studies of the dynamic period after the French Revolution have

paid close attention to democratic activity within the lower strata of Methodism below its conservative leadership, to this end the Kilhamite New Connexion and the Primitive Methodism have received much greater emphasis than their numbers demanded.

To close this thesis it has been shown that the writers on the Evangelical Revival have concentrated more on the later years as time has progressed. The early historians concentrated on religious issues and the earliest years of the Revival while the later writers have focused on the social, political and economic impact of the closing years of the period. Such a change must not be seen as surprising as the nineteenth century has given way to a more secular twentieth century which has seen the rise of sociology and other social sciences with a greater interest in economical and political, as opposed to religious issues. Many of the nineteenth century writers were clergymen of the Church of England while this is not the case in the later twentieth century. This fact is indicative of a change of approach. The chief questions are no longer whether the evangelicals were enthusiasts who broke ecclesiastical laws but whether they prevented revolution or helped the working man to ease his burden.

Bibliography

The date given is for the edition used. The one exception to this is the works of Dickens which were read in an undated edition so the date of original publication has been given. Works marked with an asterisk have only been seen through the notes of my supervisor, Dr D.W. Lovegrove. Unless otherwise stated works were published in London.

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